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Vol. I (only)

# TALES

FOR

# THE GRAVE AND THE GAY.

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# TALES

FOR

# THE GRAVE AND THE GAY.

BY THE LEADING AUTHORS OF THE DAY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. 1.

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# TALES

FOR THE

# GRAVE AND THE GAY.

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## LA TARANTALA.

AN ITALIAN STORY.

BY THE HONOURABLE MRS. GORE.

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"WHAT'S in the wind with you now, mother?—you look as black as a thunder-cloud," cried young Madeo; son and (as far as heirship might be) heir to Gioacchino, a thriving fisherman of Cotracastro, a small town of Calabria; as a stout middle-aged dame, of comely features, but bronzed into the complexion of a Chickasaw Indian, threw down, on the beach beside him, a bundle of nets, on the reparation of which she had been exercising her industry. "Has any one affronted you?—any neighbour dared to wag head, tongue, or finger, at you? Name him, and remember that your son has a heart and wears a stiletto."

"I am not apt to be a quarreller with my neighbours," replied Anetta, more calmly than might have been anticipated from the fierce glance of her coal-black and coal-bright eyes. "And when I *do* involve myself in a brawl, it will not be for the purpose of bringing blood upon the head of my son. I must sadly need an avenger, *Madeo mio*, before I call on a stripling such as you, and one, moreover, so near my heart, to venture

battle in my behalf; more especially, if, as now, your father were the aggressor."

"My father? What has the old gentleman been doing to anger you? Cracking a bottle too many with his merry mates? —or skipping his Whitsuntide offerings to the shrine of San Gennaro?—or chucking some pretty maiden under the chin? —or——"

"Spare your conjectures, lad!" said his mother, resting her swarthy hands upon the haunches which lent so remarkable an extension to her plaited petticoat of scarlet woolsey; "or, by wasting your time, which is *his*, you may chance to come in for your share of the churlishness that has so much vexed me."

"Oho! there has been a breeze, then, blowing at home?"

The good lady nodded assent.

"My father has been letting off a broadside at you? Well, do him justice! 'T is not often, mother, he finds fault with you."

"Not often he finds fault with *me!*" exclaimed Anetta. "Truly, no; but as often, I take it, as there is fault to be found! If every good wife in Cotracastro were fo——"

"I know it, mother—who knows it better?" replied her dutiful offspring, readily anticipating the well-known personal vaunt that was to follow. "You are the pearl of wives and parents. But, if not upon yourself, on whom has the old gentleman been venting his cross-grainedness?"

"On whom but your sister?" cried Monna Anetta, thus nailed to a distinct reply. "Yonder sits my poor Malfina in a shady corner, at home, with her two eyes swelled out of her head—even as I found her this morning when I returned from market; her father having taken advantage of my absence (while I was haggling and haggling to obtain a few *piccoli* more for his stale mullets), to threaten my poor girl as never she was threatened in her life; just because she chooses to remain true to a lover who was once of his own choosing, instead of accepting the fat boor, Beppo, the grazier, for her husband, who would fain take her up the country to his farm in the marshes, away from kith and kin, to spend her days in brewing pumpkin-soup for his dinner, or making buffalo-milk cheeses for his dairy."

"Beppo is a warm man," replied the young fisherman gravely. "My father's supper is not the worse served for all the fat turkeys and sacks of millet which he has heaped upon us since he took at into his head to ask for little Malfina to be his wife."

"Glutton!" ejaculated the fishwife, setting her arms more akimbo than before; "would you barter your sister for a mess of pottage?

"But, so far as my opinion may weigh in the family," continued Madeo, without seeming to notice the interruption, "if my pretty Malfinetta were to make up her mind to forget Carlo, and give her hand to the grazier——"

"Well?" cried Anetta impatiently, as her son paused for a moment, seemingly absorbed in consideration of the mended nets—"*Well?*"

"Why, she might go dwindle into her grave, ague-stricken, at Beppo's marsh-farm, before I would once demean myself to say, 'Sister, how goes it?' or, 'There blows a purer breeze at Cotracastro—Malfina, come home again, and youth and health will be restored you!'"

"That's my own Madeo—that's my lion-hearted boy!" cried the Calabrian Nereïd, seizing his shoulders and bestowing a hearty kiss on his sun-burned forehead. "The blessed Madonna knows I would rather have my girl feed at a decent man's board, than herd with a vagrant under a bush among the mountains; but not at the cost of a broken troth-plight, and, it may be, a broken heart; for Malfina's heart, Madeo, my darling, would be far easier to break than yours or mine."

"Yours?" exclaimed the boy, with a sapient nod. "Yours, mother, I take it, is natured somewhat after the fashion of the Java that flows from our old mountain yonder at Naples: it may be hard now, or seem so; but, if father's word is to be trusted, 't was soft enough when he was the stripling that I am now."

"Foolery—mere idle foolery of the silly old man's!" exclaimed Anetta, with half a frown and half a smile. "But *my* heart is not the question. 'T was of my girl we were speaking; and I would fain say, as I have often said before, that, since 't was your father's doing to suffer Malfina and Carlo so much and so kindly together when they were neighbours' children, and his

father Benettone still possessed his vineyards and his farm, 't was a hard thing to drive the poor lad from our threshold the moment trouble fell upon the family; without waiting to see what countenance he could put on to face adversity, or how labour to support a wife and children, if wife and children were vouchsafed him. 'T would have always been time enough to take up with such an oaf as Beppo, had Carlo proved himself a do-nothing or an evil-doer."

"Always time enough, quotha? Always too soon!" ejaculated Madeo. "As well marry a beggar as a batter-brained ninny like the grazier!"

"And now," returned his mother, dropping her arms and preparing to reascend the zigzag stairs cut in the cliff, and leading to the town, built partly on terraced ledges above, and partly on the crowning summit—"And now, poor Carlo is off, Heaven's holy saints know whither; and my girl sits pining over her distaff, unless when her father's menaces send her weeping into my bosom, to whisper to her poor old mother that she would fain be in her grave."

"How can one wonder that she should grieve!" observed the young man, in a more subdued tone of voice. "Such tales as the gossips of Coracastro have been sending round concerning Carlo! Girolama, the carrier, swears he made one of the party of brigands by whom Cardinal Ruffo's suite of carriages was stopped and plundered last March, in the Abruzzi; and Barto, the pilot, who was here t' other day, cruising, from Messina, protests that he was seen among the crew of an Algerine felucca, and that he will live to die the death of a dog—(or of a pirate)—namely, to be hung in chains by some English Admiral, yonder, at Valetta; where I beheld, with my eyes, no fewer than eight stout fellows (six Cephalonians and two countrymen of my own) hanging in chains—tarred over, to save them from the sun, which might have rendered them unpleasant neighbours—till they were as black as so many Savoyards after a chimney-sweeping! But here comes my father along the shore; and I shall have a rating in my turn, for having neglected to put out the boat. The breeze is fair for the rocks of San Vito, where the tunny are so apt to lie of an afternoon. So away with you, mother, to

Malfinetta, or you may come in for a share of his contrary humour."

And, taking her son's advice, although grumbling while she took it, off scrambled Anetta over the shingles, towards the wearisome staircase in the cliff; and the only shadows that fell on the scorching shore, between the merge of the deep blue sea and the dazzling whiteness of the perpendicular rock, were those of Gioacchino and his son. Anetta paused, half-way in her ascent, and, shading her eyes with her hand, looked down upon the glaring scene (so glaring that not even the rippling murmur of the waves upon the beach could impart an idea of freshness or refreshment to those who stood within reach of the sound), watching the fishing-boat dancing lightsomely upon the summer sea, waiting a propitious moment to unfurl its well-patched sails, and, with the aid of oars, escape the shelter of the cliffs, and take advantage of the earliest evening breeze. Involuntarily, the wife and mother felt her heart soften towards the two beloved ones standing in earnest colloquy beside that old boat—the good old boat—the stout old boat—which had borne them for so many years through storm and hurricane, and sea perils of all degrees of horror, till Anetta loved and reverenced the trusty bark—every stitch of every seam of whose sails was familiar to her eye—almost more than her home, and its safe and quiet hearth. The boat had yielded her children's bread, from the hour she had a child to feed. The boat would probably secure, in time, to herself and Gioacchino, a sufficient amount of gains to supply them with the means of subsistence when nature should have ceased to supply the means of exertion. The boat would prevent them from becoming, in their old age, a burthen to their son.

But, although the good woman had been thus energetic in her championship of her daughter, while conversing with Madeo, and although she had previously disputed still more vehemently on the subject with her husband, *she* was not the mother to encourage her pretty Malfina in rebellion against a parent's authority, or in peevish discontent with her destinies.

"How now, girl?" cried she, perceiving, as she entered the house, that, during her absence, the desponding beauty had

never stirred from her seat, and that she sat there listless and with folded hands, as if given over to her sorrow. "Is it your thought to remain fixed on yonder stool for the rest of the day, for all the world like an image of St. Rosabella of Sicily, in her marble shrine? Up, child, and bestir thee! Care killed the cat that would not move her paw in self-defence! Go, fetch in the nets which I left drying on the wall; or, stay, they were a heavy burthen for thee;—into thy chamber for thy spindle; and——"

"Mother!" ejaculated Malfina, with a fresh burst of tears; "I cannot, cannot work! Bethink thee of all I have learned to-day; bethink thee of the aching-head I shall this night lay down upon my pillow. Thou wert with me that midsummer evening in the woods of Monteleone, when I knelt down, side by side with Carlo, before the little chapel of Saint Uberto, and swore to be his wife, and his only. My father, too, was there, and saw no cause to forbid the vow; yet, now, demeaning himself as though he had neither heard nor seen, he bids me, on penalty of his malediction, forswear myself; and I must wed with a clod—a boor, who, from the day God put speech into his mouth, never spoke kindly word to living mortal; who comes hither and sits gaping on me with a stupid stare, without other thought than that I should make a stirring housewife for his farm."

"He were an oaf, indeed, did such a notion beset him on seeing thee to-day, *Malfinetta mia!*" exclaimed her mother. "But enough of these complaints. Railing at disaster never yet bettered the hap of man or maiden. Consider rather how best to grapple with the foe—how to encounter the coming event—how to defeat——"

"Defeat my father!" cried the girl. "My father, whose will is a law to all the house, even to thyself, mother, who have the claim of age and wisdom to share his authority!" 'T is useless to think of it—idle to talk of it. His word has gone forth, and my fate is sealed!"

"Despair was the giant who lost the battle," replied her mother, using a Calabrian proverb. "But 't is not for me to counsel rebellion against Gioacchino in his home and household. Go,

therefore, to thy aunt—go to Signora Jeronima, who, loving her brother well, loves his children better, and may put thee in a way of softening his determination. In an hour or so, the shade of the rampart will be over the path towards her vineyard. Commend me to her, and say I bade thee consult with her how all might be best accommodated."

And, thus authorised, Malfina bathed her swollen eyes, and laced up her disordered bodice, and hung around her neck the cross of gold, the gift of Aunt Jeronima, on the solemn day of her first communion; and, at the appointed time, paced slowly and steadily along the dizzy path cut in the cliffs towards Jeronima's country-house—that neat and prosperous farm which (while her uncle was still landlord of the chief inn of Cotracastro, the *Albergo della Santissima Trinità*, and Aunt Jeronima a bustling hostess) had been the property of the father of her beloved Carlo! It was under that roof her lover had seen the light—it was along the terraces of that verdant vineyard, his feet had learned to direct their first hazardous steps—it was there death had overtaken his parents—it was there the cloud of adversity had burst in wild destruction over his head. On these accounts, perhaps, the Signorina Malfinetta experienced a double interest in her visit to her warm-hearted, long-headed aunt; who, although tenderly affected towards both herself and Madeo, yet, never having experienced in her own person the emotions of motherhood, was somewhat of a disciplinarian in her notions of the conduct to be pursued towards young people by those in authority over them. Malfina, in particular, regarded her kind but sharp-voiced relative with considerable awe; and it was this which had made her so careful to refresh her countenance and costume, ere she entered the redoubtable presence of Madonna Jeronima of Rocca Bianca.

There could not be a more graceful, a more striking figure, than that of the young Calabrian, as, staglike and free of step, she traversed the precipitous path; her slight waist, with its scarlet-laced bodice of mulberry-coloured velvet, edged with a golden fringe; her short full petticoat and dark grey hosen starting out in contrast with the dazzling whiteness of the chalk-stone; while her snowy linen headgear and narrow apron enhanced the brightness of the healthful hues glowing on her "darkly delicate"

cheek. She walked steadily, for care was in her young heart; but lightly, for hope had entered there, while listening to her mother's suggestions. She felt that if any mortal hand could aid her, it must be that of Aunt Jeronima; a woman of most renowned sagacity; a woman whose sage legislation was known to have originated the unparalleled prosperity of the *albergo della Santissima Trinità*; a woman who had not only governed, but governed without vaunting, a brute of a husband; a woman, above all, who, although a widow at an age entitling her to be called "buxom," had resolutely refused to wed again, even when moved to matrimony by the Podestà of Cotracastro himself—to say nothing of a dozen other pretenders to her hand, lesser in dignity, but greater in personal attraction. Nor had Malfina much apprehension of finding her kinswoman's aid withheld on the present occasion; for, albeit a stickler for the maintenance of parental authority, Jeronima's sympathy was enlisted in behalf of her niece, by a sort of indescribable feeling that her own present prosperity was derived from her enjoyment, however honest and lawful, of the patrimony of poor Carlo; while, for years past, there had existed, between her brother Gioacchino and herself, a jarring feud, such as is apt to spring up betwixt an elder brother struggling with the destiny of laborious poverty to which he was born, and a younger sister elevated to the consequentiality of competence. She entered the farm, therefore, with a countenance so cheerful, and so little consonant with the actual state of her feelings, that Jeronima had embraced her, and patted her fondly on the cheek, chin, and shoulders; had placed her in the visiter's chair, and invited her to a cup of Rocca Bianca wine; had asked her tidings of Gioacchino, Anetta, and Madeo, and interrupted her reply, by communicating fifty idle particulars of her own affairs (from her dispute with the exciseman to a skirmish between her dog Pontone and a neighbour's cat), before she discerned, from the expression of Malfina's countenance, that aught was amiss.

And now, what discussions, what confidences, what counsels, ensued between the two kinswomen? What tales of wo were poured into the ear of the elder—what instigations of stratagem were suggested to the adoption of the younger—it suits us not,

at present, to unfold; and no eavesdropper was at hand to betray the mystery! The *jalousies* were closed, to screen the little mansion from the evening sun; Monna Jeronima's two handmaidens were engrossed with their household avocations—the one in carding flax for the distaff of her mistress, the other grinding maize in a handmill; the vine-dressers were busied afar off in their calling; even the great house-dog, Pontone, lay asleep within the shadow of the porch. There was none to listen, none to pry; the result of the conference could alone bear witness to its nature!

The first incident from which any deduction might be gathered was the altered aspect of Malfina, when, after a visit of two hours or so, she bade adieu to her loving aunt, and the gay though unassured step with which she measured her homeward way. Anetta—who, growing alarmed by the unusual prolongation of her daughter's absence, come forward nearly a third of the way to meet her—noted from afar the buoyancy of her tread, and the air of satisfaction with which she gazed around her on the sky and ocean, the only objects perceptible from that precipitous road; and wisely inferred that Jeronima had imparted comfort, even if she had not given advice.

The following day, some hours after the return of Gioacchino and his son from their little cruise, with a boat's freight of the finest anchovies it had been their luck to land for many weeks, a messenger (one of the farm damsels) arrived at the fisherman's cottage, from Rocca Bianca, requesting the favour that Malfina might be spared for a few days to bear company to her aunt, who was ill at ease in her health, and had more household business on her hands than she could well perform without aid. There was the fruit harvest and the vintage at hand—labours in the field and labours in the kitchen to be performed—besides farm-accounts to be made up, and a thousand other matters in which her little niece might opportunely bear a part. And Gioacchino, willing to assist the vintage of a sister who failed not annually to bestow upon him a hogshead of her choicest wine, and not sorry perhaps to rid himself for a time of the melancholy spectacle of Malfina's doleful visage, readily consented; and, after a duteous salutation of both her parents, and with Bettina

bearing for her a modest package of her best array, away went Carlo's true love to his ancient home of Rocca Bianca—to lie sleepless in the chamber which had once been his—to sit musing under shelter of the trellised vines where his childhood had sported—to think of him day and night, night and day—and all by way of preparative for her bridal with another. Meanwhile, that other, during her absence, refrained not from his accustomed visits to the fisherman's hut; his fat turkeys and guinea-fowls were lavished no less freely than before; nay, poor Beppo appeared to take almost as much pleasure in staring at the swarthy and contemptuous countenance of Madeo, as he had been wont to do in fixing his inexpressive eyes upon the fair and gentle face of Malfinetta. He came, in short, daily; and held long private confabulations with old Gioacchino, touching his approaching nuptials, and the prospects of his married life; for the fisherman of Cotracastro still affected to see no difficulties in the case, and to understand that his family were unanimous in desire for the match.

Malfina was apprised of all this; for Madeo, between the duties of his calling, found many a spare moment to make his way up to the vineyard; and it was on returning from one of these hurried visits, about a week after his sister's departure for Rocca Bianca, that he one evening disclosed to his parents the unwelcome tidings that he had found her looking ill, and that his aunt, Jeronima, was painfully anxious concerning her health.

"The poor girl complains of an aching head, and her eyes are dull and heavy," observed Madeo. "My aunt is grievously afraid she may have been visited by a sunstroke—for her indisposition has lasted ever since yesterday, when she was rash enough to lie down in the orchard, after toiling among the peach-trees, gathering fruit for drying. She returned to the house, afterwards, shivering and heart-sick."

"*Ahi di me! Poverinetta!*" ejaculated her mother; and had not Gioacchino been pre-occupied by his own feelings of resentment against his daughter, and projects concerning her, he could not but have noticed the coolness with which Anetta received intelligence so alarming; she whose motherly terrors had

often been excited by a splinter in Madeo's finger, or by Malfina's loss of appetite for a single meal.

"And what has been done for the girl?" was his surly interrogation.

"My aunt has prepared her an infusion of balm-leaves and strawberry-root," said Madeo, in a sorrowful tone; "but I doubt whether such feeble remedies will be of much avail."

"You really think your sister's malady of grave import?" observed his father, with growing anxiety.

"She has not touched food since she was attacked," replied Madeo.

"Go, prepare the boat," said Gioacchino, in a still more subdued tone. "The wind is fair; let us try and find a mullet for her supper. A mullet stewed in white wine is a light and stimulant dish."

"Not half so good for her as a cup of thin polenta," cried Anetta.

"Besides," added Madeo, "my aunt bade me say she would be glad that you or my mother stepped up, in the course of the afternoon, to Rocca Bianca; she wishes you to judge for yourself of the invalid."

"I have the tunny net to mend," said his mother. "Your last day's fishing left a rent in it, through which a whale might find passage."

And Gioacchino, instead of expressing his surprise at his wife's preference of so unimportant a duty to that of visiting her sick child, merely replied, "In that case, I will go myself. We must not leave too much responsibility on my sister's head."

And carefully as he was in the habit of abstaining from visits to the Signora Jeronima's thriving farm (the grapes of which, Madeo had been apt to say, in his boyhood, were sour in his father's sight), he set off, staff in hand, to Rocca Bianca, eager to assure himself that Malfina's was no feigned indisposition; and earnestly hoping that it might not prove so serious as to interfere with the nuptials of his friend Beppo.

"'T is strange"—mused the old man, as his heavy fisher's boots clamped along the cliff, and he pulled his red cap over his eyes, as if it could afford a screen from the western sun—"'t is

passing strange, that Rocca Bianca, which has always been accounted so salubrious a spot, should, of a sudden, be invaded as by a *mal' aria*. First, my sister (strong of temperament as one of king Joachim's *gendarmes*) falls sick, and must be tended by her niece. Then her niece, who, till now, hath never known an ailment, becomes afflicted in her turn. A sunstroke?—a sunstroke after peach-gathering in a shady orchard! A sunstroke?—she, who from babyhood has been accustomed to defy the very glare of noontide—here, on the cliffs, in the eye of the sun; yonder, on the beach, with the burnished reflection of the waves! It can scarcely be!—'tis fretting that has done all. The wench has ceased to sleep, and ceased to eat; and her strength has suddenly failed her. All the beggar Carlo's doing—all the handiwork of the beggar Carlo! No *mal' aria* at Rocca Bianca when *he* was harboured there, or I should now be rid of his name. And yet—holy San Gennaro!—if all this were pretext!—if the damsel were bent on fooling me, to obtain a remission of my decree touching her marriage! Be on thy guard, Gioacchino! 'T were a bitter jest that a beard as grey as thine were plucked in derision by a couple of weaklings; or, it may be three—for, if the girl be shamming, no doubt my sister is of her counsels. Was she not herself constantly practising on the soft head and soft heart of my poor brother-in-law of the *Santissima Trinità*, who is dead and gone?"

But, on entering the vineyard habitation, and casting his eyes upon his daughter, Gioacchino's mistrust vanished. It was not that she was either flushed by fever or pallid from exhaustion; that she lay reclined upon her couch, or otherwise assumed the air or attitude of an invalid. But poor Malfina's distemperature seemed rather of the mind than body. She looked stupified and insensible to what was passing around her; replied not to her father's salutation; and when her tender aunt issued orders to young Bettina, her handmaiden, to set the *jalousie* ajar, to afford a surer view of the countenance of the invalid, she took no note of the bright rays which fell upon her face; although Gioacchino involuntarily cried aloud to have the blinds closed again, ejaculating that it was only too plain the poor wench had been visited by a *colpo di sole!*

"*Un colpo di sole!*" exclaimed Bettina, contemptuously. "What Calabrian born ever suffered from a sun-stroke? In our blessed country, the sun and the people are too kindly disposed towards each other to fall out. A blind man might see what ails the sweet young mistress. *È tarantala, Messer* Gioacchino—*è tarantala!*"

"*Tarantala?*" cried the fisherman, in dismay.

"You are too forward, child—who asked your opinion?" exclaimed Bettina's mistress, rebukingly, while Malfinetta remained torpid in her chair, apparently unconscious of the discussion.

"But has the tarantula been actually seen, sister, in your orchard?" cried Gioacchino again—uttering that dreaded name with the true Calabrian sense of loathing.

"Not that I am well assured of—not that I have ever *seen*," replied Signora Jeronima, with mysterious significance.

"But you have heard?" resumed the old man, his dark cheek waxing almost livid with terror.

"I have heard, I admit (just as I but now heard the ejaculation of the goose Bettina), that more than one tarantula of prodigious size has been known to breed in the old wall betwixt the orchard and vineyard. But what then? My predecessor, farmer Benettone, brought up a large family at Rocca Bianca, without one's hearing of a *tarantala* among *his* children; and why your daughter, Malfina, of all people in the world, should come to spend a few weeks at my vineyard, and fall in with a tarantula on the first day or so——"

"I don't know—my mind misgives me," interrupted the fisherman. "If a tarantula have been really seen there——"

"And in what farm of all Calabria has not the tarantula been seen?" interrupted Jeronima in her turn—satisfied that she had touched the chord of one of her brother's most prejudiced superstitions. "In the maize-fields, or among the clover-pastures, in vineyard, olive-ground, mulberry-plantation, wood, forest, warren, or even quarry, the fatal spider, at one time or other has been known to dispense its venom. No spot is safe; and I know not why my poor orchard should inspire you with greater apprehensions than any other place."

"Bah?—I meant no offence to you or your orchard!" cried

Gioacchino, pettishly. "But look at my girl, and you are answered. You cannot but discern in her fallen countenance and lustreless eyes that the worst has happened. She has been bitten, sister!—she has been bitten!—Bettina is right—Bettina has more sense than all of us put together:—*la Malfina é tarantala!*"

"Heaven be good unto us! Let us trust *not!*" piously ejaculated the wily whilome hostess of the *Santissima Trinità*. "*Tarantala!*—a *tarantala* in our family? Why, unless she be speedily exorcised, the poor girl may never again enjoy a rational frame of mind! She will pine, and pine, and pine—and there will be an end of her;—she, who, if I rightly understand, brother, was pledged in marriage to Signor Giuseppe, the buffalo-feeder, and was to wed him before the close of the month."

"*Ahi!*—my poor friend Beppo!—There is an end of his hopes!" exclaimed her father. "'T is of the girl's health and not her bridal, we must now be thinking! *Una tarantala!*—Unlucky Malfina! I have not so much as heard of a tarantula at Cotracastro for the last twenty years. My old playmate, Ninettina, the carrier's daughter, was the only *tarantala* I ever happened to see; and she, poor dear, threw herself from the cliff, and was dashed to pieces before the fitting ceremonies could be performed for her relief. I admit that my daughter wears much such a countenance as she wore; and if *you* feel convinced, sister, that Malfina has been stung——"

"The Signorina's left foot was strangely inflamed on the first day of the attack," observed the officious Bettina.

"No time must be lost," continued the fisherman. "I will make my way into town, ere I return home to my wife, and consult Fra Eustatio of the Franciscans, touching the measures to be pursued."

"Well thought of," replied Jeronima, casting a glance towards her niece. "In a week's time comes the vintage moon. All Cotracastro, for the love they bear our family, will wish to witness the ceremony, which cannot be more advantageously performed than here, at my farm. So soon as you and Anetta have made your arrangements, let the affair be duly proclaimed. I would not have the business inhospitably done. Your daughter's young companions and *their* companions must be invited. Let

Anetta mention it to-morrow at market—let Madeo speak of it in the harbour; since the misfortune *has* occurred, let us meet it nobly."

"For my part," cried Gioacchino, "I could never see the wisdom of making such a calamity an affair of feasting and junketing."

"'T is from time immemorial the custom of our province," replied Jeronima; "and never heard I yet of the land that was bettered by setting aside its ancient customs. On this head, moreover, we have nothing to learn from other climes. My old friend, the Podestà, who is book-learned, and can read the tongues of nations that exist no longer, assures me that in no country has the tarantula so fatal a venom as here in Calabria, or yonder in Apulia; and it follows that we must be better studied in the means of cure. The irritated nerves are to be soothed by dancing, and dancing only; that movement can be excited in the patient but by the well-measured strains of a lively music; and since music must needs be provided for the ceremony, and the *Tarantala* enjoy intervals of repose in her exertions, why not allow her young playmates to distract their thoughts from the sad circumstance, by dancing in their turn? In short, *caro mio fratello*, 't is the custom; and *we* must bend to and observe it, like our neighbours."

In pursuance of this opinion—an opinion to which so many of the wisest elsewhere than in Calabria are forced to subscribe—were the preparations of the two families achieved. A certain day of August, when the moon would be at full, was set apart for the observances which were to restore the fisherman's daughter to the enjoyment of her health and reason; and all talk of her marriage was suspended. Poor Gioacchino, in the interim, paid daily visits to the sufferer, who maintained a mournful silence in his presence. Anetta busied herself preparing new garments for the *Tarantala*, to grace the ceremony; while her young friends—including many from the villages around Cotracastro—made arrangements to take a part in the evening's recreation. News that a *Tarantala* was to dance away her disorder at the vineyard of Rocca Bianca, where noble preparations were in hand, flew from hamlet to hamlet. Malfina was duly

compassionated—themselves mutually congratulated; and, if the private anticipations of Anetta and her daughter were not fulfilled—that, if Carlo were lurking anywhere within thirty leagues' distance, the intelligence must reach his ears, and suggest his immediate return to his afflicted love—it was not for want of taking sufficient pains to circulate the report. Nevertheless, the day approached; and no Carlo was seen at Cotracastro. Madeo—who, although excluded from the female councils of the family, and wholly unsuspicious of collusion between his mother, sister, and aunt, prosecuted, of his own accord, and in all directions, inquiries after the object of Malfina's attachment—could learn nothing further of his movements than he had already gathered from Barto and the carrier; gave up all expectation of his return; and had nothing to reply, when his father announced that, so soon as the *Tarantala's* recovery was effected—perhaps before her return from the vineyards—the ceremony of exorcism must be followed by that of her marriage with Beppo of the Maremma.

At Rocca Bianca, meanwhile, all was bustle and activity, to the heart's content of that stirring housewife, the Signora Jeronima. It seemed as if the industry of the *padrona* and her domestics were proportionate to the immobility of the hapless *Tarantala;* who sat transfixed in her chair, or, at least, contrived to be found so when visited by her father and brother, or subjected to the scrutiny of the Podestà and Fra Eustatio. Bettina and Chiodetta, the serving maids, could scarcely find hands enough for the spicing of cakes and the seasoning of sausages; and such kneading, baking, boiling, basting, and stewing, as filled the kitchen of the farm with appetizing exhalations, had never been known there since the wedding of farmer Benettone. Till the very day of the great event, Jeronima was scarcely able to rest a moment from her labour, or inquire of herself whether it were likely to prove labour in vain.

It was upon a wide terrace, intervening between her little dwelling and the "farmy fields" beyond, that the singular ceremony of "*de-tarantalization*" (since a word must needs be coined) was appointed; the hard surface of which, of beaten chalkstone, was neatly swept and garnished for the occasion, and its bordering of lavender, marjorum, and sweet basil, duly trimmed and

refreshed. At one extremity, stood an arbour, trellised over with vines in rich bearing, in which it was purposed that the father and mother of the *Tarantala*, as too much interested in the event to join the sports of the night, were to take up their retreat; before the entrance of which was placed a large arm-chair, covered with tapestry (a relic of the Benettone family), to receive the heroine of the night; a stool being prepared, on either side, for the Podestà and the Franciscan, who were to officiate in the portentous rite. At the opposite extremity of the terrace were benches for the spectators; and, facing the central flight of steps leading from the house, sat the musicians, some eight or ten in number, forming an orchestra such as no town of the insignificance of Cotracastro could be expected to furnish, saving in that fatherland of music—harmonious Italy. Scarcely had the sun gone down when the bidden guests, attired in holiday array, began to assemble; till the platform of the terrace became gradually variegated with that wondrous diversity of colours which enlivens the Calabrian, Apulian, and Neapolitan costumes; and while the golden west still gleamed in gorgeous radiance, and the Mediterranean waves reflected far below the cloudless brightness of its overhanging canopy, a shout from the gathering throng proclaimed the arrival of the Podestà, the great man of Cotracastro; and the group of Malfina's family and friends immediately took their places in and near the arbour. A solemn pause ensued, and all eyes were turned towards the steps, expecting that the sufferer was to follow. But no Malfina appeared. The musicians sat impatiently with their Calabrian bagpipes, their clarionets, and oboes in their hands, occasionally venturing a stray note by way of reminder; the young people stood fretting side by side, eager to take their part in the interlude; the elder females gathered mysteriously together by twos and threes, maundering over anecdotes of all the *tarantale* it had been the lot of their long lives to behold; insinuating that some, in spite of all the rites, spiritual and temporal, administered, had never wholly recovered; that the tarantula was increasing fearfully in the neighbourhood of Cotracastro; and, finally, hinting that Signor Giuseppe would be a bold man if he ventured on an immediate marriage with a bride so afflicted. The twilight grew duskier and

duskier, and these murmurs deepened with its shades! A tone of mysticism seemed to pervade the assembly. The children who had accompanied their parents drew closer to the side of their mothers, and one or two curly-headed little beings were seen to creep under cover of the broidered aprons, or pendent faldette of their matronly protectresses; till, on a sudden, "uprose the yellow moon" of vintage (that vast and glowing orb of southern climates, whose reflexion almost rivals the sunshine of our own more chilly latitudes), and in a moment all was light and cheerfulness around. The trees sent down at a distance their lengthened shadows; but, on the terrace, all was hallowed by the clear but subdued brightness of intense moonlight!

And now, as if the scene had grown into accordance with her feelings, came forth the *Tarantala*, escorted on the left by Aunt Jeronima, and on the right hand, led solemnly and silently by the Franciscan friar—at once her ghostly and bodily comforters, her mind's and health's physicians; and although, as she gravely traversed the terrace, Malfina's eyes were seen to be fixed upon the ground, her cheek of a deathlike paleness, and her brow inexpressibly sad, few of her own sex could refrain from exclaiming upon the beauty of her features and figure as she passed; while the young Calabrian vintagers and shepherds interchanged many a merry by-word, touching the anxiety Messer Giuseppe must feel for the recovery of so lovely a bride.

If such, however, were the case, the inexpressive face of the buffalo-grazier gave no sign of his inquietude. Stationed hard by the arbour, with his dull impassive stare fixed on the proceedings of the night, which he had come from the marshes to witness, accompanied by a whole train of his herdsmen and dependents, Beppo evinced no interest in the scene around—even when the Podestà, rising from his stool, advanced towards the chair in which Malfina had been seated by Fra Eustatio, and while the Franciscan pronounced a brief form of prayer over her head, placed in her hands a drawn sword, on the up-pointed blade of which the moonlight was observed to fall "with a chill and ghastly glitter;" and, lo! as if respondent to the attitude of intercession with which Malfina up-raised the weapon towards the summer sky, a slow and solemn strain breathed mournfully

upon the air—a slow anthem-like measure, moved by whose inspirations, the *Tarantala* advanced towards the space marked out for the dancers, and, with many a graceful change of posture, waved the glittering sword successively towards the points of the sun's rising, the sun's setting, the northern and southern poles. Every eye was upon her, as she accurately timed her movements to the grave and almost mystic notes; till, by degrees, the musicians quickened the strain, and, after a series of complicated steps, and well-imagined attitudes, the "Tarantula-bitten," as if overcome by fatigue, suddenly dropped the point of the sword, and, after leaning for a moment's repose upon the hilt, retreated to her chair of state, leaving the terrace free for the performance of the guests; while Fra Eustatio and her good aunt hastened towards her, sprinkled her with a mixture of cold water and citron juice, and fanned her with one of the ample fans of the country.

Gayer measures now succeeded. The youths and maidens of Cotracastro and its environs, warmly as they regarded Malfina, the fisherman's daughter, were not so wholly engrossed by her critical situation as to refuse themselves the gratification of a fandango, when the *fagotti* and the gay castanets were sounding, and the moon shining softly upon their revels; and, amid the stir of many feet, and the sound of gurgling laughter, the *Tarantala* was, for a time, forgotten. At the close of the little divertisement, however, when the youthful couples, retiring from the platform, wandered among the trellise-covered vineyard walks, as if to seek a cooler atmosphere, Malfina was again beheld seated in her chair, surrounded by aunt and mother, Franciscan and Podestà; and no sooner had time been afforded to the musicians to recover breath and elbow-strength, than a word was whispered in her ear by Fra Eustatio, and again she quitted her place, and advanced into the centre of the terrace. Alone and unaccompanied, the chief oboe-player immediately commenced one of the favourite provincial airs of Calabria—a hymn to the Virgin, an "Ave Maria" often heard along the shore of Cotracastro at evening-tide—and, as if by spontaneous impulse, Malfina instantly recommenced her slow and gliding movements; till, at the close of the air, the whole orchestra burst suddenly into the

wild and hurried measure of the *Pizzica*—the most popular form of the Neapolitan Tarantella, and obviously derived from the superstitions connected with the bite of the tarantula. Madeo instantly stepped forward from the throng, to give his hand to his sister, lest Beppo, in an ill-timed fit of gallantry, should force himself on her acceptance as a partner; and so remarkable was the beauty and agility of the pair—so well studied their movements—and so rapid their evolutions—that an involuntary cry of applause arose from the spectators. Yet, even her brother's vigour of limb was no match for the fatal excitement of the *Tarantala*; and, as Madeo was tired down, another and another partner succeeded, and still Malfina danced on, unwearied, and, apparently, unweariable. The musicians seemed to gather inspiration from her energy. Quicker and quicker grew the notes, and wilder and wilder the rapidity of her steps, till, at length, as if smitten by an invisible blow, she fell senseless to the earth, and was borne by her brother into the arbour, whence her father and mother had withdrawn, at Jeronima's suggestion, to refresh themselves with a cup of wine. Chiodetta and Bettina, therefore, flew, at the call of the young fisherman, to refresh their Signorina Padrona, with a renewal of her fragrant shower-bath; and, reassured by their attendance, Madeo, tempted by the lively strains of the *Tarantella*, which had now become general, quitted the arbour to join the dancers, the moment restored consciousness dawned in the eyes of his sister.

Gay, gay scene!—The rattling castanets keeping time to the lively measure; the flaunting robes of the pretty Cotracastrians, and the loose linen sleeves of their partners, borne floating on the air by the buoyancy of their movements; the tawdry lace of their costume glittering in the moonlight; the bright smiles of their upturned faces scarcely less brilliantly revealed; joyousness bursting forth into laughter and familiar cries; names of tenderness playfully exchanged; many a gay challenge spoken and answered—combined to characterise one of those curious national exhibitions, whose mirth springs from the heart, and whose aim and origin are alike pure and unsophisticated. By degrees, the object of the meeting was forgotten in universal hilarity. The old feasted and made merry; the young, hand clasped in hand,

luxuriated in the geniality of the hour and season; nor was it till loud and repeated shrieks were heard to issue from the arbour, and Bettina was seen pushing her way through the throng in search of her mistress, who was doing the honours of the banquet within, that the attention of the dancers could be directed from their pastime.

"What ails thee, child, to be pale and trembling thus?" cried Jeronima, in dismay, as her handmaiden burst into the hall and stood panting before her. "Speak, Bettina—is it my niece's turn to bear her part in the dance?"

"Heaven's mercy be on her—she will dance no more!" ejaculated the gasping girl.

"Is Malfina worse—does her indisposition increase?" inquired Jeronima, making a private signal to her handmaiden.

"No further use in feint or stratagem!" said Bettina, lowering her voice. "Ah! mistress, mistress!—I misdoubted me that evil would come of these mummeries. 'T is a deriding of the mysteries of Providence, to presume to act the part of a *Tarantala* without——".

"Silence!" whispered Jeronima sternly, "or tell me at once what ails my niece?"

"She is lost, madam——"

"Dead?" interrupted the horror-struck Jeronima in her turn.

"Worse a thousand times:—gone—carried off by armed men;—borne away from the harbour by brigands!"

"Impossible!" exclaimed Jeronima, herself so prone to stratagem that she was ever on the look-out for deceit in others. "'T is some jest or some artifice."

"Neither jest nor artifice, but the truth," persisted the girl. "As the Signorina was reposing herself on the bench, a man pushed me rudely aside from the arbour-entrance, seized her as she sat; bore her forth in his arms; and when I would have cried aloud upon the guests for succour, three of his comrades rushed forth from among the trellises, and stopped my mouth, and held me fast, while the ruffian, to whom the ways of the place seemed familiar, fled with his burthen through the orchard-gate, and so regained the open fields. It was not till they were out of sight that the men left in charge of myself released me, and

made off after their companion. Then did I scream aloud and aloud for aid."

"Where is Madeo—where is my nephew?" exclaimed Jeronima, her copper-coloured face growing livid with horror.

"What is the matter?" demanded Fra Eustatio, cutting open and peppering a noble water-melon, on which his eyes were fondly riveted. "Friend Gioacchino—friend——"

"Hush!—On your life, alarm not my poor brother," interposed Jeronima. And rushing from the house, she made off in search of the stout and active brother of the abducted damsel. "Know you what has chanced?" was her abrupt inquiry, as, at length, she encountered Madeo, guiding his partner, one of the fairest girls of Cotracastro, among the trellised walks. "Your sister is carried off by a villain, and my mind misgives me that 't is no other than Benettone's son."

"My sister carried off?" ejaculated Madeo.

"How were the ruffians attired?" demanded Aunt Jeronima of Bettina, whom she had dragged with her in pursuit of Madeo.

"Alas, Madam!—I scarcely dare to tell you," faltered the girl.

"Speak out, dearest Bettina," said the young fisherman, breathless with anxiety.

"All four were dressed after the fashion of the Abruzzians," was her reply; "and bore arquebuses in their hands, and poniards by their sides!"

"Brigands, as I am a Christian woman!" cried Jeronima. "Madeo, Madeo! not a moment must be lost. Pursue them, my dear boy—pursue the villains, and rescue your unhappy sister!"

"Pursue them!" echoed Madeo, in a desponding tone. "Easily said, but how to be accomplished? Unless they were well mounted, think you they had ventured on such an enterprise? I have neither horse nor mule, and ere I procure one, all trace of these wretches will be lost!"

"Signor Giuseppe's horse and those of his men are stabled at the *Albergo della Santissima Trinità*," observed Bettina; who, having a suitor of her own in the farmer's service, took good note of his movements.

"Where is Beppo?" cried Madeo. "His will is good towards our family; he will lend me his best horse for such an errand."

"Signor Giuseppe was standing beside my mistress in the hall, when I brought in the fatal tidings," observed Bettina. And immediately all three set off to the house in pursuit of the farmer. But neither Beppo, nor a single man of his train, was to be found. It appeared that, having overheard the startling intelligence communicated by the serving girl, he had collected his people and left the house; and Jeronima's heart misgave her at this announcement; for she remembered the avowals by which Bettina's communications had been accompanied, and doubted not that the farmer had quitted her mansion in disgust. Madeo, meanwhile, hastened towards the hostelry of the *Santissima Trinità*. But here again he was too late—Beppo and his men were not to be heard of in Cotracastro; and the young sailor, as deficient in equestrianism as most men of his calling, was forced to content himself with a broken-winded mule, to pursue the route pointed out by Bettina as the track of the abductor. All, meanwhile, was desert at Rocca Bianca—the spot so lately crowded with revellers was now solitary. The guests had dispersed; Jeronima and her brother parted in mutual dudgeon; and Anetta alone thought proper to pass the night under the roof of her sister-in-law rather than brave the fury of her husband.

While these scenes of confusion were passing at the vineyard, the plight of the pseudo-tarantala was scarcely less deplorable than that of her anxious relatives. The shock of her sudden abduction, following on the exhaustion of frame produced by her exertions in the dance, plunged her, indeed, for a time, into a state of insensibility; and when, on recovering her senses, she found herself borne rapidly through the air, mounted on a strange horse, and even encircled by the arms of a stranger, a second fainting fit bore witness to the reality of her terrors. By degrees, the freshness of the night air restored her to herself, when, as her heavy head drooped over the shoulder of her mysterious companion, the perpetrator of so gross an outrage, a well-known voice penetrated the inmost recesses of her ear and heart!

"What dost thou fear, Malfina?" cried the voice once so familiar and so precious. "Although *thou* hast proved faithless, and consented to pledge hand and faith with another, I mean thee no harm. What art afraid of?—Thou shalt neither be served up

whole for the supper of my trusty messmates of the forest, nor sent back in quarters to thy jackass of a father, like the vintager's pretty daughter of Priolli, whom her parents forced to break faith with the gallant Massarone."

Words such as these, and uttered in a tone of bitterest taunting, served only to redouble the terror of the captive.—"I have borne much for thy sake, Carlo!" she faltered, trembling in every limb as she spoke. "Upbraid me not—menace me not."

"Calls she my mirth a menace?" exclaimed the brigand, bursting into a shout of coarse laughter. "*Madre di Dio, Malfinina!* —Thou wilt chance to learn the true nature of a menace, ere thou hast dwelt a month with my plain-spoken comrades in the greenwood. No, no, pretty maiden! *I* utter no threats to such as thou!—Although, forsooth, thou couldst, without scruple, forsake thy betrothed love, to give thy hand to a hog-driver and buffalo-butcher—although the fatted calf is even now ready to be slain, down yonder in the Maremma, for thy bridal—I have no word of reproach to cast at thee. Thou hast but acted after the impulses of woman's nature—filthy, mischief-seeking, graceless, wanton woman! Well, all is for the best! Hadst thou, by faith and truth, maintained my esteem, it had, perhaps, been a bitter lesson to me, holding thee as I do to my breast, to remember all I once was and hoped to be, and all that circumstances have made me; while, as it is, I can say to thee freely, as I have said to others as pretty as thyself, 'Away with me to the greenwood, gentiletta! and thou shalt lead a merrier life than city, ay, or court, could afford thee.'"

"Carlo!—have mercy on me—refrain from these cruel words," said Malfina, at length gathering strength to reply. "Others have said this of thee, Carlo, and I refused to believe them; but now——"

"Said *what* of me?" sternly interrupted her companion, tightening his grasp of her slender waist.

"That thou hadst taken to the mountains, and joined a band of marauders; and that wantons and plunderers were associated with thy enterprise," replied Malfina, with the forced calmness of desperation.

"And if it were so?" cried the robber, "(and thou shalt shortly

judge for thyself, for we are within a three hours' ride of the forest where my captain is cantoned for the vintage season), if it were so—if a price were set on my head—if I avowed myself in thy hearing, thief, assassin, traitor—what then? How often hast thou sworn to be mine for richer for poorer, for better for worse? And now (saving the wifehood of the case, for we have, at present, neither priest nor monk in our band) thou mayst fulfil thy vow. Thou wilt have no fat buffaloes in thy close, no hogsheads of wine in thy cellar, no dainty waiting-maid to lace up thy bodice; but a score of trusty fellows shall wait, carabine in hand, to do thy bidding; and, to say nothing of a few sacks of gold pieces which I may be tempted to consign to thy keeping, I will bestow on thee a string of pearls for a rosary, and a diamond cross withal, such as might entice to sin the Ursuline Abbess of Cotracastro. Would the Maremma grazier do more for his bride?"

"That I should be compelled to give ear to such insults!" murmured Malfina, folding her hands fervently on her bosom. "That for the love of this bravo, I should have presumed to reject an honest man's affection!"

"So proud and so fierce?" quoth Carlo, bursting again into loud and hollow laughter. "Well! I have seen fiercer and prouder tamed into most dovelike softness, after a week's schooling in the forest. Women are of a metal easy to mould, if the furnace be hot enough. It took me half a year or more ere I could learn to stab, and brawl, and dice, and drink, and riot, as became one of the Knights of Moonlight; but I warrant me to train to submission the faithful wife (that was to have been) of the buffalo-driver, Beppo, in less than an eighth of the time."

And finding that his victim was now too completely overcome to attempt either remonstrance or intercession, the brigand blew a shrill whistle, and his companions, over whom he seemed to exercise a certain degree of authority, rode up in a moment, when a conversation ensued, exciting to a still higher pitch the terror and disgust of their unfortunate prisoner.

Hitherto, the route pursued by the brigands had traversed the open country, between vineyards and corn-fields; but just as they saw fit to ride more compactly, they reached the confines of

the forest of Monteleone; and it conveyed a sensation of bitter anguish to the heart of the captive, to find herself an object of scorn and persecution to him with whom, in those very woods, she had breathed her earliest vows of womanly tenderness.

"Carlo!" whispered she, when, as well as the darkening shades of the overbranching trees would permit her to ascertain their approach to the little hermitage and shrine of Sant Uberto—"there is a God over all! This is the spot where we knelt together, in His holy name, for the utterance of a hallowed vow. Profane it not by acts of cruelty and violence, or evil will surely overtake thee!"

"Brava—bravissima!" cried the brigand. "She talks of Providence like a bare-footed friar. It seems I am not only to obtain a mistress in my pretty little Malfinina, but a preacher, and, it may be, a confessor! Where didst learn these pious doctrines, sweetest? Was it by the bite of the tarantala thou wert inoculated with the true faith? Alas! the lovely *Tarantala* deigns not to reply!" And, as if to punish the obstinacy of her silence, the ruffian ventured on a familiar caress, which caused a shriek of indignation to burst from the lips of the terrified Malfina. But, at the same instant, she felt herself precipitated to the ground; and, as she lay half-stunned by the fall, confused sounds reached her ears—the detonation of firearms—the trampling of many horses—the imprecations of angry voices. A hope of rescue, of deliverance, lightened her heavy heart Heavy moans revealed to her that the brigand, from whose arms she was scarcely yet disentangled, was severely, if not mortally, wounded. She soon learned, from the exclamations of the horsemen by whom she was surrounded, that two of his comrades were already dead; and, on hearing orders issued to bind the wounded Carlo and the remaining prisoner to two of the stoutest horses, it was a source of mingled joy and mortification to her, to perceive that the friendly hands by which she was carefully lifted from the dust, and gently replaced on horseback, were those of the grazier, Giuseppe. Warmly as she expressed her gratitude for his aid, every word uttered by Malfina tended to betray the excess of her disappointment, that she was not indebted for her safety to her father or her brother.

"Spare your protestations of gratitude, young woman," said Beppo, in his usual short dry tone; as, having seated Malfina before him on his sheep's-skin saddle, he turned his horse's head towards Cotracastro—"they will deceive neither of us. The events of the night are scarcely more satisfactory to me than to yourself. By God's will, I have captured a notorious bandit; and, thank Heaven, his blood will be on the hands of justice rather than on mine. But mistake not the motive of my periling my life in the pursuit. It was for no love, still less for any respect I bear you; for this very night I have gathered that, from the idle prating of your wily aunt, which proves you to be alike liars and impostors. I sought you to be my wife, Signora Malfina, though other damsels of the district would have brought me the dowry in which you were wanting, and faces little less comely than your own, because Gioacchino the fisherman is the honestest man in the district; and I believed that his blood was warm in your veins. I had watched your girlhood; I honoured the steady straightforwardness of your attachment to your young playmate; it pleased me; and I saw, or thought I saw, truth and goodness in your face. I was mistaken. You had the heart to wring tears from the eyes of your old father; you had the cunning to deceive the Podestà, to mislead the skill of Fra Eustatio. Now, therefore, Signora Malfina, fear nothing farther from my courtship. Did the whole province of Calabria afford no other bride, assure yourself that Giuseppe would sue for your hand no more. To your father would I fain restore you unharmed; for the respect I bear his grey hairs and upright dealing: once safe under guardianship of his right arm, and you become a stranger in my sight."

Poor Malfina was too profoundly absorbed in her own reflections, to be acutely sensible of the bitterness of this rebuke, or to resent it towards the offender; and, when in safety in the bosom of her family, she was too overjoyed by her unlooked-for redemption to be resentful of the lofty contempt of her deliverer. But when days, weeks, and months passed away—when Carlo, who, after long confinement in prison, was about to be released, on the refusal of Beppo and his men to come forward in court and identify his person, was incarcerated anew, and

eventually condemned to the galleys, as the convicted perpetrator of the outrage committed on Cardinal Buffo—when her brother Madeo rang hourly in her ears praises of Giuseppe's valour, in her behalf, and magnanimity towards his former rival —when Anetta and aunt Jeronima united in a declaration that they had altogether misunderstood the character of the grazier, which proved to be as firm and generous as that of Benettone's son was base and contemptible — her conscience reproved her, and her wounded feelings attested its accusations, that, by her own folly, her own faults, she had forfeited the regard of a man of feeling, sense, and integrity! Gioacchino, when alone with his daughter, occasionally gave her to understand that explanations had taken place between himself and his worthy friend, and that he condoled with her on the loss of so good a husband; and poor Malfina, although too proud to admit her disappointment and declare her change of feeling in favour of the contemned Beppo, refused, for his sake, more than one eager and wealthy pretender to her hand. She prized him, indeed, for the very scorn with which he had overwhelmed her; admired his contempt for her shallow artifices; bore open testimony to the bravery and nobleness of his proceedings towards her once-favoured Carlo; and secretly resolved to "wither upon the virgin stem in single blessedness" for his sake. She even ceased to remember the surliness of his address, while reflecting upon his upright and honourable principles. From the period of her terrible adventure, not a cloud was ever known to shade the ingenuousness of her character. Her word became proverbial for frankness, her deed for honesty. But it was not till the integrity of her principles had been established by five years of unswerving probity and truth, that the bluff buffalo-driver was tempted to forswear himself by renewing his proposals to her father.

Jeronima, to whom the singleness of her niece had been a source of deep disquiet, would fain have celebrated the long-wished-for bridal at Rocca Bianca. But Malfina, to whom the remembrance of the tarantula scene afforded such bitter reminiscences, would not hear of it; and Giuseppe, as he conveyed home his happy wife in a neat covered carriage to the farm, was moved to whisper in her ear—"I will not swear, sweet one, that

thine eyes may not have lost a sparkle of lustre, or thy cheek a tinge of youthful bloom since first I sought thee in marriage of thy father; but this I know, that I had never been happy in gaining thy affection, or in placing implicit confidence in thee as my wife, had it not been for the strange adventures and repentances attached to the fête of Rocca Bianca and the Tarantala of Cotracastro!"

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# THE FRENCH FISHERMAN.

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In the winter of the year 1812, the principal sea-ports of France were closely guarded by the blockading squadrons of England; and those places which were not deemed important enough to claim so large a portion of its naval force, were sufficiently watched by the smaller men-of-war, and chartered privateers, to check, almost effectually, her intercourse with the commercial world. Thus circumscribed, her traffic along the coast became proportionably important and valuable—limited to the only maritime protection she could afford. The small chasse-marées, deeply laden with wine from Bordeaux, brandy from Nantz, or articles for domestic purposes from Quiberon, of a very humble description, lined the coast, sheltered by the batteries, in convoys of one, two, and three hundred sail at a time. Many, however, of the swiftest of these little vessels, eager to pursue their route, and anxious to avoid the restraint as well as procrastinated delay to which their remaining with their comrades often subjected them, would dart along under the shade of night, or the cheering prospect of a favourable breeze, and were not unfrequently becalmed in the centre of a bay which they had attempted to cross, to avoid the circuitous track *along* its margin. These were the gentry upon whom our attention was fixed, and they seldom failed to attract our lynx-eyed observation.

On a fine evening, just as the disk of the sun was sinking in the horizon, eight cutlasses, a corresponding number of pistols, six muskets, a keg of fresh water, a small proportion of rum,

and a compass, were cautiously placed by us in the galley, a long eight-oared boat, which, from her former exploits on the coast, had often excited the admiration and terror of the trading vessels. The oars were carefully muffled, a rocket and two or three blue-lights were stowed away in the stern-sheets, and, when the warm tint of the setting sun was no longer visible, she silently pulled away from the ship in the direction of two very large chasse-marées, which lay becalmed a long distance from the land, with their sails helplessly flapping against the masts. On this occasion it fell to my lot to accompany my friendly monitor, Mr. Elwin, in the boat, and we pulled five miles in the direction alluded to, before a single word was spoken.

As we approached the spot where the chasse-marées were seen becalmed, we slackened our speed, and each man in silence prepared his fire-arms. Guided by the compass, which lay at the bottom of the boat, we again pursued our course; but there was not a vestige of either vessel to be seen, although we traversed the ground over and over again, and strained our eyes to penetrate the gloom of night, until they felt like balls of fire when withdrawn. Reluctant to return to the ship without having accomplished our purpose, we pulled in for the land, thinking it not improbable that chance might favour our views. In about twenty minutes we again lay on our oars, and the last man had just swallowed his allotted portion of rum and water, when we saw, or fancied we could discern, a dark object on the verge of the horizon. We were at first disposed to imagine it one of the vessels described on our mind, but the galley, accelerating her speed, soon neared the object, and each man letting his oar glide gently alongside the boat, we ranged up softly under the stern of the largest gum-vessel I ever saw. About seventy men were strewed on her deck fast asleep. An awning was spread over the vessel, and the arms of each man lay on his right side. There was not at this moment a breath of wind in the heavens. The stars twinkled in myriads over our heads, and sparkled like diamonds on the dark surface of the tranquil sea. We lay in this extraordinary position for at least five minutes, each of our men holding his breath while he gazed intently on his sleeping enemy, with his pistol firmly grasped in his right hand. The order was

at length given by a silent motion from our officer to leave the vessel; and we allowed ourselves to drift with the current, until our drowsy foe became once more a dark speck in the horizon.

It was some time before Elwin sufficiently recovered from the conflicting state of mind in which this singular scene left him, to be able to discuss its novelty with any thing like calmness. The trial to him, poor fellow, had been severe, almost beyond endurance. He knew and felt that his promotion in the service depended on his own exertions, and he had long panted for a favourable opportunity to signalise himself. The men continued to ply their oars in silence. I perceived from the compass that we were pulling in for the town of Rochelle; but it never once entered my head that he would venture nearer than within musket-shot of the batteries. When, however, we found ourselves within pistol-range of the enemy, the whispered admonition to the men "to row gently," convinced me how much I was mistaken; and the impulse that something was yet in reserve for us, banished all conjecture from my mind.

In a few minutes we were at the entrance of the small river leading up to the town. Fortunately there was a slight surf on the pebbly beach, which drowned the measured sound of our muffled oars, and we passed the batteries without being challenged. Our little band were thus arranged: the two foremost men kept a sharp look-out ahead on either side of the narrow channel; four of the crew who occupied the centre of the boat were prepared with their fire-arms to act on the moment; and the remaining two plied their oars at lengthened intervals with noiseless accuracy. In this manner we stealthily pursued our silent course, until we found ourselves within a few yards of a large sloop which lay on the outside of a tier of small vessels, the innermost one of which was secured to the quay. Elwin, who was much the tallest man in the boat, raised himself erect to reconnoitre her deck; and then beckoning to the four men in the centre, boarded her by her channels, the after-hatch being quietly laid on, over which a man was placed with a brace of pistols and a cutlass.

As if to compensate us for our former disappointment, every thing seemed to favour our enterprise: the tide was at its ebb;

we knew the channel to be perfectly clear; and at the moment we cut her moorings, and opened the folds of her single topsail, a light breeze sprang up, which bore us at a rapid rate down the river. As we approached the batteries, Elwin asked me, in an under tone, if I could speak French; but I had scarcely answered in the negative, when two voices from either side roared out, "Qui va là?" [Who goes there?] Elwin motioned to us to lie down. The challenge was quickly repeated. "Répond, ou je tire!" [Answer, or I fire!] shouted the angry sentinels; and, in less than a moment, two bullets whizzed across our bow. The alarm was now spread. "Les Anglais!" [the English!] resounded from one end of the harbour to the other; lights gleamed in quick succession along the shore, and shots, fired at random, fell harmlessly around us. We had now passed the barrier, and, before the enemy could get their guns to bear on us with effect, we had receded from their aim; and as we were gliding rapidly through the water with a freshening breeze, we fancied ourselves comparatively secure, when the following accident soon undeceived us:—One of the men, in handing the compass out of the boat, betrayed our only light; a mark of which the French cannoniers promptly availed themselves. In an instant we were struck by three forty-two-pound shot. Our topmast, to which was appended the only sail we had spread, fell over the bow, and a chance ball nearly knocked my promotion on the head. Elwin ran to the helm, ordered the foresail and jib to be set, bore away three points, and in a few minutes we had changed our position, and were again free from the direction in which the guns of the enemy were pointed.

The batteries continued to amuse themselves for some time; and when Elwin conceived himself out of the track of the gunboats, he directed the mainsail to be set. Up to this moment it had not occurred to us to examine the hold of our prize, although we pretty well guessed it could not contain much, from the height the vessel swam out of the water: when, therefore, the hatches were removed, nothing was visible but a heap of stones, over which were strewed some musty straw, the staves of an old empty wine-cask, a few marquées, and a loose crate of pottery, used by the peasantry for domestic purposes. The com-

stant hammering which our captives kept up against the hatch that confined them to the cabin, regardless of the unintelligible though good-humoured threats of their sentinel, at length induced Elwin to release them; and, when it was removed, a feeble old man, in a white cotton night-cap, crawled up the narrow aperture, followed by a fine boy, both of whom gazed at us in bewildered astonishment.

The poor fisherman, who stood before us, supported his attenuated frame with his right hand leaning on the bulwark of the sloop, while his left rested on the shoulder of the little boy. He stared at Elwin, then at me; glanced his vacant eye at the men who stood on the fore part of the deck; looked over the side of the vessel, then at her mast-head; and having seemingly convinced himself of the fatal truth, he despondingly exclaimed, "Hélas! mon petit tout est perdu!" [Alas! my little all is lost!] At this moment our attention was suddenly arrested by a blue light, which beautifully illumined our frigate; and, as we prepared to anchor the vessel, we thought more of the venerable old man and his sorrowful exclamation than we did of our own exploit.

We had scarcely swallowed our meagre breakfast of weevilly biscuit and cocoa next morning, when our poor old captive was sent for, to be examined by the captain. His sloop lay at anchor within half a cable's length of our starboard quarter. Her sails were neatly furled; and, as if to mock the misery of the old man's feelings, she looked better than he had ever seen her before. The English union-jack hung in loose folds over a small cotton tricoloured flag at her mast-head; and the little skiff, which had carried the old man to his cottage for more than forty years, was moored under her stern. The sea, extending along the coast from Rochelle to L'Isle Klie, was covered with fishing-boats, which were grouped together as the morning breeze had left them; and the lively songs of the fishermen might be distinctly heard, as their voices swelled over the smooth surface of the water.

Our aged prisoner was habited in the costume of his humble station. A large pair of boots, drawn loosely over his trousers, had settled down in ample folds over the knee; a blue and white-

striped Guernsey frock fitted closely the upper part of his slender person, and a pea-green jacket of considerable dimensions covered his shoulders, very much in the style of a handspike in a purser's bread-bag. In the days of his youth he must have stood at least six feet two; but age had materially crippled his height, and his weather-beaten features were wrinkled by time. His hair showed itself in silvery whiteness beneath the margin of his night-cap; and he held in his shrivelled hands a ball of twine and a mesh, with which he had been mending his nets the day before. He was eighty-three years' old, and his little grandson stood timidly by his side, gazing in mute astonishment at the order in which every thing was beautifully arranged on the quarter-deck.

During the examination of the old man, we all listened with eager attention to every syllable that was said. The inquiry was carried on through the medium of an interpreter, one of our forecastle men, who spoke French so fluently, that, upon one occasion, when he was himself a prisoner of war, he narrowly escaped being shot for a spy. As the vessel was not worth sending to England, we all concluded she would be given back to the poor old fisherman, and I think we all hoped so; when, however, it was announced to the afflicted captive that his sloop would be set on fire that night, he clasped his hands in energy, and, raising his mild eyes to heaven with an air of pious resignation, stood for some moments transfixed to the spot, as pale and as motionless as a marble statue. I cannot recollect a more painful incident in my life; and I have at this moment the meekness of the captive's attitude so strongly pencilled in my memory, that I can scarcely imagine more than twenty years have elapsed since I witnessed the event. Relaxing from his humble posture, the countenance of the old man underwent a sudden change: his features became convulsed with agony, the blood rushed to his temples, and, snatching up his grandson in his arms, he held him forward as an appeal to the feelings of the captain, while he invoked a Blessing on the children of the British warrior. He called on the names of his beloved wife and the father of the youth, pointed to the cottage on the beach about a mile from Rochelle, wherein he had dwelt for sixty years; and when he

found that the usage of war enforced the severity of his destiny, he laid the little boy beside him, and cursed it with all the bitterness of despair.

As soon as the captain communicated with the commander-in-chief, the sloop was hauled alongside our ship, and dismantled. Every article that could be made convertible to our use was taken out of her. The almost worn-out tanned sails gladdened the sharp eye of the first lieutenant, who secured them to add to the whiteness of the quarter-deck; the fishing-nets, which had for so many years provided for the wants of the old man's family, were headed up in a cask, and consigned to the charge of the boatswain; and the purser came in for his share of the prize for fuel. In a short time nothing was left but the shell of the sloop; her planks and rafters were cut away, and at sunset she was set on fire. I could not help thinking, young as I was at the time, that the hour selected for the destruction of the old man's vessel was the most appropriate throughout the day, as the flag of England was lowered at the moment the deed was done. It blew a strong breeze out of the roadstead; and as the burning mass slowly drifted out to sea, the fisherman and his grandson sat together upon one of the carronades, watching in silence the receding speck of what had been the day before all the property he possessed in the world.

Towards midnight, all that remained visible of the sloop was a glimmering spark on the horizon, which became fainter and fainter as it receded from our view. After we lost sight of it from the deck, the little boy went up the mizen rigging, where he remained until it disappeared altogether. The assistant-surgeon, an intimate friend of mine, was my companion on watch that night; and as he understood the French language, he felt a lively interest in the passing scene. When the little boy left his grandfather to ascend the shrouds, we went up to the poor old man, who still occupied his station on the carronade. We were both struck by his appearance; and I have never seen a picture of mute despair equal to the features of the captive that night. He sat in gloomy abstraction, with his eyes intently fixed on the spot whence the last vestige of his sloop had disappeared. The attitude we found him in he had occupied for five hours; his

hands were folded on his breast, and there was a vacant stare, nearly approaching to wildness, in his eye, which might have been mistaken for insanity. My friend laid his hand upon the old man's shoulder; he started; the touch awakened him to a sense of his miseries. At first he shrank from it; but the mild benevolence of my companion's features softened the bitterness of the captive's feelings; the tears unconsciously trickled down his weather-beaten cheeks, and, abandoning himself to the intensity of his grief, he wept like a child.

My friend, whose feelings were of the first order, had compassion for the old man's sufferings. It was a scene of agony, which, I trust, I may never again witness. We gently removed him—for he suffered himself to be led passively—to a seat we had formed of some signal flags near the cabin skylight; and a little rum and water, the only nourishment he had taken all day, revived him. We sat down beside him; the night was cold and damp; a few lights glimmered along the coast; the little boy descended the rigging, and nestled himself under the lee of his grandfather. The captain's bell rang—we started: it was only to inquire if the wreck had disappeared! I answered yes; he turned on his pillow, and fell fast asleep.

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# MARIE MARNET.

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"EPHRAIM," said my uncle to me one night, when the wind was blowing its November gusts with the utmost violence, and dashing the rain in sheets against the windows, that shook at their blusterous greeting, "I wish you would step down to Marnet's, and see how that poor girl and the old man fare; and take Philip with you, and let him carry a couple of bottles of wine, and anything there is in the house. This is a sad night for the poor, Ephraim, and doubly so for the poor and the afflicted. Thanks be to God, we know but little of the physical sufferings of life. I hardly like sending you out—but with your capote—and you know, my dear boy, it is on an errand of mercy."

"Say no more, my dear uncle," I said; "a worse night than this has seen me on the way to pleasure, and shall not stop me in the execution of the more creditable task you allot me now."

Old Marnet, who had seen better days, received me with tears of gratitude, and sought many blessings on my head, and that of my uncle. His daughter, a fair and gentle girl, of much beauty, and an amiable and somewhat cultivated mind, was in the last stage of a decline, induced by the too fatal success of the insidious schemes of that scourge and disgrace of the civilised world—an amiable villain.

"And how is Marie?" I said.

"Oh, Sir!" said the poor old man, "she is very ill, but her sufferings will soon be at an end. Eternal curses on the scoundrel that robs me of my poor girl—a thousand curses on him! I

would have pardoned him with my dying breath if he had taken my life; but if I forgive him this, may God never forgive me!"

"Hush, hush, Marnet," I said; "all may be well yet—subdue your just rage—you are a father, but remember also you are a Christian. There is a God above who will avenge you more terribly and more justly than you can avenge yourself."

"Ay, Sir, but *he* looked not to heaven for his enjoyments when my poor lost girl fell—nor can I for my revenge now she is fallen. Can I think of the joyful day that gave her dear, excellent, and departed mother to me? or of the happy moment that first gave me, in my poor Marie, a father's title? or of the happy hours when I used to dandle her little innocent form on my knee, and gather joy from her smiles and prattle, and her playful gambols?—and can I recollect her rude glee, when she tottered to me with outstretched arms, on my return from my daily labour?—or can I think of her poor mother in her grave (the Lord be praised, who took her to his bosom ere this), and of her last words, when, in tears and agony, she gave her to my arms, and bade me keep her from the world, and ever watch over her?—and then her grown beauty, and her kind, and affectionate, and confiding, open heart, and all my hopes and expectations of her in my old and lone age?—can I think of these and forgive him? Ah, Sir, you are not a father—you are kind, very kind, but you are not a father! The bitterest curse of God light on him! He thought not of God when he cast his gloating eyes on my poor guileless girl; let him, however, think on him, and call on him before he looks on her father, or it will go worse with him than with thee, my poor Marie!"

"Compère," cried an old woman, who had been watching Marie, hastily entering the room we were in, "it is right your daughter should have the offices of religion, for she is very low, and I fear me but too near that time when they are most wanted."

"Oh!" said the old man, beating his forehead, "my girl, my darling girl! Well—I will go."

"Haste, then," rejoined the old woman, "lest it be too late."

"Stay," said I, "I am younger and better fit to meet such a night as this, and I shall lose less time on the errand. Stay you here, and I will soon be back."

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"Yes, I will go," said the curé, "and Marguerite, hearest thou, reach me my cloak, and my slouched hat, for I fear it is a dismal night."

"It is, indeed, father," I said; "but heaven will bless you for this exercise of your charity."

In a quarter of an hour we reached Marnet's house, and the curé immediately proceeded to administer the last consolations to the dying girl; while this was doing, her father remained below with myself and the old woman. The poor old man was mad with despair, and occupied the interval in striding hastily across and across the room with a frightful impetuosity; invoking imprecations on the head of the author of this grief—swearing solemn vows of vengeance, and shedding many and bitter tears for his daughter.

When the curé's task was completed, he was again summoned up stairs; alas! only to receive his daughter's dying breath, and to accord to her frantic intreaties his pardon and blessing; then she bowed her beautiful head, and slept with her heart broken.

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"This is a sad tale, Ephraim," said my uncle, when I returned; "a sad, sad tale! And so the old man cursed him—and who would not?"

"Yes, Sir," I answered; "but I expostulated with him."

"You did!" said my uncle; "well then I curse him. Nothing has been made in vain, and it was for such scoundrels curses were made—I curse him too!"

Poor Marie had been dead about a month, and the talk of her untimely end had begun to subside, when my uncle and myself were roused one evening, as we sat over our quiet bottle, by the report of a pistol and a sudden scuffle under our window. I instantly rushed down into the street, and found old Marnet, cool, collected, and unresisting, in the hands of the *gendarmes;* he recognised me immediately. "Good God!" I cried, "what is this?"

"I have kept my word, Sir," he answered; "blood for blood is Scripture. Did I not say if I forgave him, or avenged not my poor Marie, I hoped God might never forgive me? See, Sir," he said, pointing to a corpse round which the people were gather-

ing, "he will never lacerate another father's breast, or bring another Marie to the grave."

I was horror-struck; I drew near to the dead body, and found it was all that remained of the handsome and depraved Auguste Bertrand.

Marnet was put on his trial; great interest was made for him; his judges even strained at every point that seemed to favour him, and the very *huissiers* wept, but the law sternly demanded and obtained his conviction; he alone was unmoved: and when his sentence was passed, he fell upon his knees, and thanked God that he had been permitted to be the instrument of its vengeance.

The night before his execution I saw him, when he placed in my hands a small miniature of Marie, which was surrounded by a braid of her hair. "Keep that," said he, "in remembrance of two whose grateful prayers often ascended for you. I have nothing else, and if I had, that is what I most prize, and therefore would give you. You are a young man—keep it; and if ever passion struggles in you against your better feelings, remember there are other such fathers as old Marnet. And if ever, as a father, the same misfortune overtakes your child that overtook his, remember that old Marnet, a poor man, but yet with a father's heart, set an example which, if he were yet to live, he would think it doubly criminal in him not to follow."

The next day Marnet died, wept by all. Even his executioner turned aside the old man's grey hairs from the axe with a kindly air. He was buried in disgrace; but a pompous *cortège* had ere then followed the remains of Bertrand to the grave, and a costly monument of marble yet covers the earth he polluted and pollutes.

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# 'SQUIRE DRIBBLE.

"REMEMBER six to-day," said Tom Heartall, whom I met coming out of the club as I was entering it.

"It has been looked these ten days," replied I.

"But do be punctual, there's a good fellow," continued Heartall, "for I have invited a stranger to join us."

"I will," said I: "but you press for punctuality as if it were the necessary consequence of your having invited a stranger to dine with you."

"And so it is, in this instance," replied he. "Yesterday I dined at Worthington's (who, you know, is to be one of my party), and there I met him. He has some business which will detain him in town for a few days; and, as he has taken up his quarters with Worthington, I was compelled, in decency, to ask him to accompany his host. He seems to me to be a queer fish: and Worthington, who is always anxious to promote every one's comfort, hinted to me, in his kind-hearted way, that punctuality would oblige *him*; for that his friend was as savage as a bear if made to wait for his meals a minute beyond the appointed feeding-time."

"A pleasant acquaintance you have made there. What is his name?"

"Dribble."

"Dribble! Surely I have heard that name before. Is he an Essex man?"

"Why," replied Heartall, "he is not exactly what, when

speaking of the native gentry of the county, we should call an Essex man, though, certainly, he has a place in Essex."

"I 'll lay my life it is the same: Dribble—'*Squire* Dribble, of Dribble Hall, near Poppleton-End, on the road to Little Pedlington?"

"The very same," replied Heartall: "his house is the show-place of the neighbourhood."

"I remember: it was either the landlady at Squashmire-gate, or some one else, who told me that all the world went to see Dribble Hall, which was full of curiosities, but that the 'Squire himself was the greatest curiosity in it. I rejoice at this opportunity of meeting him," continued I, "for I missed one when I chanced to be in his neighbourhood."

This conversation occurred in the early part of the month of July last, shortly after my return from Little Pedlington.

Ephraim Dribble is the son of Barnaby Dribble, who, in his blessed lifetime, was a small grocer in Crooked-lane, Fish-street-hill. To many persons it may be interesting to know that Crooked-lane was so called, because, till within these four or five years, it was, incontestably, the crookedest lane in all London. But, by the magic of modern improvement, it has been deprived of this its supreme distinction; and all that now remains of Crooked-lane (though it still retains its name) is as straight as an arrow. Ephraim, as a boy at school, was an industrious plodding boy, with a natural disposition to "turn an honest penny"—his own interpretation of the phrase being somewhat an enlarged one, as it included within its range the getting the best at a bargain with a school-fellow, by any means short of absolute fraud. The penny *per diem*, which was Ephraim's allowance of pocket-money, he would lay out at his father's shop in figs or raisins, which were sold to him at prime cost. Of these, he used to set aside a small portion for his own eating (for, from that hour of his life to the present, his love of money has never completely overpowered his love of self-gratification); the remainder he would dole out, in farthing's-worths, to his school-mates—reducing the quantity for the money in proportion as their gluttony overcame their prudence, in exactly the same way as traders, upon a more extensive scale, regulate the

price of a commodity according to the quantity in the market and the demand for it. Thus he was usually a gainer of two or three farthings by the day's transactions. In addition to this, which might be considered as little Master Ephraim's regular traffic, he would sometimes, if his customers happened to be short of money, generously sell his farthing's-worth on credit; or he would even lend a boy a farthing in hard cash, on promise of being paid a halfpenny for it at the week's end; and this he would do upon no better a security than the deposit of a top, a ball, a book, a penknife, or any other trifle, provided it were of sufficient value to protect him against any possible loss. His mother was wont to say that Ephraim was a "deep one," who knew how many beans made two; whilst his no less admiring father was satisfied that their boy was a "'cute one," who would make his way in the world.

At the age of fourteen Ephraim was taken home to serve in his father's shop. Here he had many opportunities of exhibiting his "depth" and exercising his "'cuteness:" it was astonishing with what dexterity and delight he would shuffle a few lumps of the twelve-penny into a customer's bag of the fourteen-penny sugar; and marvellous was the accuracy with which he would adjust the scales when weighing out a pound of tea, withdrawing six grains, or two, or one, if it inclined the balance against himself! At two-and-twenty he had the misfortune to lose both his parents. This calamity was rendered endurable by its leaving him the sole inheritor, not only of all the figs and treacle in the shop, but also of about fourteen hundred pounds in money. Thus enriched, Ephraim Dribble sought, and found, occasions for the indulgence of the natural benevolence of his heart. Was there a brother-tradesman driven to the verge of bankruptcy by the want of a hundred pounds or so, Ephraim was forward to assist him with the sum—merely taking in return for it sundry chests of tea, or bags of coffee, at a fourth of the market-price. Thus was the ruin of a worthy man delayed for a few months, whilst the kind-hearted Ephraim exulted in the exercise of that virtue which was *not* its own and sole reward. To a man who, like him, lays himself out for opportunities of performing generous actions, such opportunities are of frequent

occurrence; so that at the end of ten years Dribble found that, by sheer dint of assisting the distressed, his hundreds had distended into thousands. Resolved now to exercise this species of knight-errantry upon a larger scale, he sold the shop in Crooked-lane, opened a counting-house in Fenchurch-street, called himself Dribble and Co., and became a West-India merchant—that is to say, he would buy for ready money, from any house which happened to be in a rickety condition, a whole consignment of sugar, coffee, pepper, or any other colonial produce, at a third or a fourth of its prime cost, and sell it, amongst the smaller traders, below its actual value, yet still at a considerable profit to himself. For several years he continued this successful mode of assisting his fellow-creatures, till about four years ago; when, having realised as much capital as, invested in the funds, would produce him a clear five thousand a-year, he resolved to retire from business and become a gentleman:—the latter portion of the resolution being much the more difficult to accomplish of the two.

Just at this time it happened that Tubbs, the eminent Sugar-broker, failed. Tubbs's curiosity to visit foreign parts being suddenly excited by the event, and an immediate supply of money being requisite in order to enable Tubbs to gratify a curiosity so praiseworthy, he applied to his intimate friend Dribble for assistance. Dribble, whose purse was ever open to the unfortunate, instantly supplied his friend with the large sum of four thousand pounds; and his friend, who could hardly expect that any man would give him four thousand pounds for nothing, made over to him his country residence, Muscovado House, together with the acres thereunto belonging, all which had fairly cost Mr. Tubbs eleven thousand. To this place, which, upon Mr. Dribble's accession to the property, was newly named Dribble Hall, did Mr. Dribble retire; and its fortunate possessor (commonly known as "the 'Squire") now calls, and seriously considers himself to be, an Essex Gentleman, in spite of the provoking distance at which he is held by the real gentry of the country, whom he cannot induce to recognise him as such. Fifty-two, indeed, is rather late in life for one to begin to think of *doing* the gentleman; and Dribble, although he has had four

years' practice, is still (as an actor would express it) by no means perfect in the part.

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It was on the twentieth of December that I returned to London from a continental tour which had occupied nearly four months. My first visit was to Tom Heartall. After some talk upon various subjects, Tom (with more of diffidence and hesitation than, as I thought, the inquiry warranted) said, "Do you consider yourself as engaged to dine with us on Christmas day?"

"By implication I do," replied I; "for, for the last nine years, we have passed that day together. But for that circumstance I should have remained to enjoy the humours of that convivial season in Paris."

Heartall burst into a hearty laugh: a sure sign that he was aware of some small calamity in store for me.

"Ha! ha! ha! So you have taken all this trouble for the express purpose of dining with us on Christmas day? Ha! ha! ha! My wife is at her mother's, in the New Forest, and will not be in town for a fortnight. Ha! ha! ha! All the children are with her. Ha! ha! ha! You have come to England purposely to keep up the charter—Ha! ha! ha!—and I have accepted an invitation for myself to Dribble Hall: so, so far as *we* are concerned, you are floored, my boy. Ha! ha! ha!—But," continued Heartall (laughing louder and longer than before), "I have worse news than that for you: Dribble has made a point of your spending Christmas at the Hall; I know you don't like him; but I, considering you as my property for that occasion, have disposed of you. In short, I have accepted the invitation on your behalf."

"Then, as you are not my accredited minister *près la cour de* Dribble Hall (as the diplomatic phrase is), but have acted wholly on your own responsibility, I repudiate your adhesion on my behalf, and leave you—(as the diplomatic phrase is *not*, but as it very frequently might emphatically be)—I leave you to get out of the scrape as well as you can. Seriously," continued I, "I don't like your 'Squire Dribble. He is a person eminently disagreeable as a society man: I know nothing of his character otherwise, but that is enough."

"He is not a positive Chesterfield," said Heartall.

"A person deficient in the observance of the *forms* merely of politeness may be pardoned in consideration of the sterling qualities of his heart; but Dribble is wanting, to an offensive extent, in that *real* politeness which, independent of manner, is the spontaneous offspring of humanity and innate benevolence. He is an uncompromising egotist, in the French sense of the word: he never defers, nor does he even affect the civil semblance of deferring, to the ease, comfort or convenience, the pleasure or the wish, of another; his own is always paramount in his consideration."

"I perceive what you are thinking of," said Heartall, laughingly: "the wing of the chicken, when you met the 'Squire here, at dinner, last summer."

"That instance was only one amongst a score, but as good an illustration of his character as a thousand. I remember Mrs. Heartall asked Mrs. —— what part of the chicken she should send her. Your 'Squire interrupted the lady's reply by saying, 'Give *me* the liver-wing, if you please, Ma'am; it is the only part of the bird *I* care for." Then, he kept one particular decanter before him (passing the others round), because, as he said, that wine was the most to *his* taste of any he had yet drunk; and, having selected, for his own eating, the finest fruit from three or four dishes, he amiably asked the lady on his left what *she* would like. In the evening, when several of the party requested your wife to sing '*Vivi tu*," he interrupted her as she began, by saying *he* had rather she would sing something English, as *he* didn't much fancy Italian music. He prevented three others making a rubber at whist, where he was wanted as a fourth, because *he* just then preferred a round game; and, afterwards (having lost a few shillings), he turned sulky, because the three others did not then choose to humour him by sitting down to whist."

"To say the truth," said Heartall, "I, myself, have no great affection for the fellow; and it is chiefly to please Worthington, who sees every thing and every body *couleur de rose*, that I have accepted this invitation. Now, do you also accept it to please me. In his own house, and towards his guests, Dribble *must* behave himself decently."

"Have you yet paid a visit at the Hall?"

"Not yet," replied Heartall. "Worthington has brought him to dine with me some half-dozen times since you met here in the summer, and at his departure the 'Squire has always been so civil as to say that if *I happened to be going his way* he should be happy to see me; but this is the first special invitation he has honoured me with. He asks *you*, I take it, as a set-off against the dinner you gave him just before you left town; so, as he carries his old business-habits into all his arrangements, you have only never to invite him again (a negative proceeding very easily taken should he not improve upon farther acquaintance), and be assured of it you will escape a second invitation from him. By the by, he has written to you. Here is his letter."

The 'Squire's letter ran thus:—

"Dribble Hall, near Poppleton-End,

"Dear Sir, 2d Dec., 1835.

"*Per* letters, dated the 30th ult. and forwarded *per* post, I had the satisfaction of inviting our friends, Messrs. Worthington and Heartall, to pass the Xmas next ensuing at my house, as above. In mine, addressed to Mr. H., was conveyed a request that you would accompany them. Both letters, duly delivered to them yesterday the 1st inst., as acknowledged by theirs to me dated same day, and duly received, *per* return of post, this morning, date as above. Sorry to find, as *per* advice from Mr. H., that up to the date of his you had not returned to England; but am glad to be favoured with his undertaking, on your behalf, that you will accept my invitation to spend the Xmas with us, i. e., *from the 24th to the morning of the 26th inclusive*, in case you should return *on or before the 20th inst.* Should I not be advised of your return *per* arrival of post on the 21ST INST. at 10 A. M. (there or thereabouts), must invite somebody else to fill the vacancy; as, upon these occasions, 8 is the number I always like to have at my table (neither more nor less), and, at present, standing thus, *viz.*—

Myself.

Mrs. D. who joins in hopes of your return in time to make one.

3. Mr. John Flanks, } brother and sister of above.
4. Miss Susan Flanks, }
5. Mr. Ebernezer Dribble, first cousin to undersigned.
6. Thomas Brisbane Heartall, Esquire. } Visiters.
7. Francis Worthington, Esquire. }
8. Yourself (or as the case may be). }

Total 8.

"Please observe that, unless I am advised of your return *punctually* by the time above specified (*say* 21*st inst.*), I shall invite Dr. Cawdle, of Poppleton, *in your room*. Please observe, also, that if you *do* favour me with your Company, I shall expect you to remain *from* the 24th (arriving *at* or BEFORE 4, as I dine at that hour *precisely*, liking a long evening in the Country) till the morning of the 26th, having made my arrangements to that effect. Say the 26*th*, because the London Coach (15 shillings in and 10 out, coachman and guard optional), which only runs on *alternate* days, will pass the end of my lane at about 11 in the forenoon of that day, allowing plenty of time for breakfast *before you start*; otherwise, should you unluckily miss that conveyance, you could not get away from the Hall till the 28th, which would interfere with *other* arrangements of,

Dear Sir,

(for self and Mrs. D.),

Your most obedient Servant,

EPHRAIM DRIBBLE.

"P. S. Being 3 together, perhaps you may think it more agreeable to come down *per* chaise, in which case please order the people at the last stage to *send* horses to take you away on the 26th inst. (say at or about 11), as I have no one I could conveniently send to order horses for you, the distance being 14 miles. E. D.

"2nd P. S. I re-open this to say that by 11 I mean 11 *A.M.*, being *most particularly engaged to dine out* on that day. E. D."

"Business-like habits, indeed!" exclaimed I. "Why, plague on the fellow, he has drawn up a letter of invitation as guardedly and cautiously as if it were a deed of assignment of half his property; and made out a list of his party exactly as he would have done one of his old Crooked-lane bills of parcels. An agreeable

person to pass a Christmas with! The mind which could concoct such an epistle as this never was, nor even can be, actuated by one generous or social impulse. His hospitality (if, indeed, this extraordinary invitation to his house deserve the name) is so regulated as to suit his own pleasure and convenience in every point. The fact is, he is living in a lone house, in a dull district; he wants society to enliven *his own* Christmas; so he writes up to town for it, just as he would for a basket of fish for his Christmas dinner, because he cannot get it in the country, and imagines that he is to be supplied as readily with the one as with the other—and thanked, perhaps, for his custom, into the bargain. It is said that the boy is father to the man. *That* is certainly true in the present instance: for 'Squire Dribble, of Dribble Hall, is unquestionably the son of little Ephraim Dribble, the petty peddling school-boy who used to traffic in small grocery. I'll none of him."

"My dear fellow," said Heartall, affecting a grave countenance, "I 'm truly sorry for you, but it is too late to get out of it."

"Not for me," joyfully exclaimed I. "To-day is the twentieth; I have merely to suppress the fact of my return, delay my reply to this letter, and, according to the strict terms of it, the fortunate Doctor Cawdle will succeed to the chair vacant by the lapse of me, the original nominee."

"Too late, I tell you. Early this morning I heard of your return, and instantly wrote to inform Dribble of it. In fact—ha! ha! ha!—I added that you will have great pleasure in availing yourself of his invitation."

"Why, then, joking apart, I must say that——"

"Now don't look so grave about the matter," said Heartall, "but bear your share of the misfortune as I bear mine—with patience and resignation. I go to please Worthington, who likes this cub for the same charitable reason, I verily believe, that good-natured Mrs. Toddy likes her ugly, barking, snarling poodle—because nobody else does; so, as I said before, you must go to please me. I will admit that I do not look upon our prospect of a 'merry Christmas' as a very brilliant one; but we shall be three to one, at any rate; and, with the season to aid us, the

deuce is in it if we cannot manage to beat sufficient humanity into the 'Squire to make us happy and comfortable for the time."

Well! Few of the minor matters of life are worth a long contest; so, yielding to Heartall's entreaties, I promised to meet him and Worthington, for the start to 'Squire Dribble's, on the morning of the twenty-fourth.

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# A STORY; SAD, BUT TRUE.

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THERE are people in the world who stoutly deny the possibility of any one dying or going mad through love. Tell them a story in confirmation of it, and they will only laugh in your face and deride your weak credulity; nor is it to be wondered at that among mankind there should be some who would rather abridge than multiply the passages by which the life and peace of human beings make their escape; and who would consequently rather believe that the best and noblest properties of our nature would hardly be made use of to injure or destroy it.

Yet, in spite of all that, love can both kill and render insane, as this narrative will show. All the writer has to say is, that every word of it is true; and, should any one be disposed to doubt a single part of the statement here given, he may have his doubt removed by inquiring, through the Editor, into the particulars of the case himself. In the quarter where the unhappy individual lately resided, the *facts* are well known; the reader will, however, excuse the necessity which causes the names of some of the persons and places to be feigned.

In 1824, or thereabouts, Dr. Spring, upon taking his medical diploma at the University of Edinburgh, commenced his profession in London. Like other medical men, he had to combat—and he combated with success—the difficulties which seem to lie in heaps upon the threshold of a medical man's career. The brilliancy of his course at the University, and the singularity of his scholastic habits, had, however, combined to render the in-

troduction of Dr. Spring into the great world of London rather more favourable than falls to the general lot. Great learning, under an agreeable manner and modest deportment, lent its assistance to bring him into public notice. His lectures were spoken of as the master-pieces of the day; his opinions were quoted and criticised by the leading journals; and, by the time he had stood two years, he began to be employed by the highest classes of society. At the end of the third, his receipts amounted to nine hundred a-year, and, among his patients, there were those who had inserted his name in their wills for small legacies, in proof of their estimation of his faithful attention during their illness and decay.

While walking onward on a path of flowers, he was called in to prescribe for a young lady who had been taken suddenly ill of typhus fever. Under his skilful treatment she speedily recovered, to the great joy of her father: she was an only child, and heir to a fortune of one hundred and fifty thousand pounds. As she considered her life might perhaps be owing to the skill of Dr. Spring, she felt from the day of her illness the deepest feeling of gratitude towards him; which, in process of time, began to lose itself in the still nobler quality of love. This change was not unperceived by him; and, having constant opportunities of conversing with her, allowed him by the absence of her father throughout the day, he did not fail to promote its growth. Ere long, he was as deep in the tender passion as the lady herself; and vows were sealed between them that they should one day be man and wife.

Meanwhile, Dr. Spring's fame was not stationary; though his affections were confined to one spot, and wandered not from the house of his devoted Louisa day or night, his mind was intent upon the duties of his profession. At length his prospects assumed a form so apparently prosperous that the happy lovers thought they might with safety venture to marry. Independent of his professional income, Dr. Spring had an annuity of two hundred pounds: whether Louisa would receive any portion of her fortune before the death of her father was yet to be ascertained, as his consent to the marriage still remained to be asked; and, as he was a person of the most despotic temper and forbid-

ding manner, it was by no means an easy undertaking for either of the parties to make the necessary disclosure to him! Hesitation could not long dwell in company with so many ardent hopes and wishes as possessed the breast of Dr. Spring: the first favourable opportunity of addressing a few words in private to the lady's father was seized to communicate the affair. Without a moment's consideration, or the alteration of a single feature, the old gentleman pronounced his refusal; his daughter might, it was true, marry, but if she did, not one farthing of his money should ever go into her possession.

There was nothing in this harsh reply very astonishing to Dr. Spring, who had long perceived that Louisa's father loved his money first, and his daughter next. Neither was it very appalling to a physician of his celebrity and income to be told that he should receive nothing with his wife; though there was, to a sensitive mind, as his was, something exceedingly painful in the circumstance of causing a daughter to forfeit her father's favour and her own fortune in order to make him happy. He was well aware they could live comfortably together on a thousand a-year, in a quiet way, in town; but Louisa had hitherto been accustomed to her own carriage. He loved her too well, moreover, to put her in a new and a worse position, which must be the consequence of his marrying her at such a time: these considerations occupied his thoughts for some weeks. They were all discussed between them; and the result after all was, that they should be married within a month.

Matters being thus arranged, Dr. Spring took a house and furnished it, in one of the most fashionable squares, and formally acquainted Louisa's father that he should be united to his daughter on such a day. This intelligence seems to have excited some dormant sparks of parental regard, which had before lain entirely buried under a mass of worldly cares; for the tidings no sooner reached his ear, than he ordered Dr. Spring to leave his house, and never again to enter it. As there was no alternative, Dr. Spring bowed and withdrew; still trusting that Louisa might be able to mollify his anger, and overcome his opposition to their union. In this he was destined to be disappointed: the old man became more and more

averse to it; and, in order to cut off all intercourse, for a time at least, he hurried his daughter away to the Continent, where he determined to stay a twelvemonth. He took pains, also, to prevent all letters passing between her and Dr. Spring. The love of gain at length brought him home; and as he found his business greatly in arrear, he was under the necessity of leaving his daughter to the custody of her own discretion for several hours a-day. Her affection had undergone no change during the lapse of time she had been debarred from hearing anything of Dr. Spring; the first twopenny-post after her arrival in town carried a letter to his house, assuring him of the constancy of her attachment, and expressing the hope that his affection would never be shaken. Some weeks transpired before this letter came into his hands, in consequence, as his answer informed her, of his having abandoned his practice in London, and become family physician to a noble Lord, who was afflicted with insanity, in a remote part of the country. Distress and despair had united to commend this step to Dr. Spring, shortly after the news of Louisa's departure for the Continent had reached him. For ten weeks had the post been charged with the most impassioned letters ever penned by lover's hand to the object of his adoration; but no answer being returned to console, or dispel the anguish of his heart, it was stung with bitter disappointment. He concluded, therefore—for what does not a *dead silence* between lovers lead them both to dread and conclude?—that his Louisa had been led, by that obedience which is due to a father, to break the sacred vows by which they were bound together; and the conclusion was so terrible to him, that he could no longer pursue the duties of his profession in a steady or satisfactory manner. Thus had it become impossible for their union now to take place. Before, he had a tolerable certainty of a fixed income of a thousand a-year, with the most flattering prospect of rising to eminence in his profession; now, he had accepted a situation of five hundred a-year, not capable of any improvement or augmentation; affording only, perhaps, a ray of hope that, when his services were no longer available to his noble patient, a small pension might repay them after his death—which was not supposed to be far off. Louisa's sorrow, upon finding the possibility of their marrying

thus almost extinguished, was so great, that her life was considered to be placed in great danger for some months; by the hands of a mutual friend, letters, however, began again to pass between them. The vermilion resumed its place upon her cheek, and her downcast countenance was seen again to beam with its wonted light. In a short time her natural vivacity returned, and her solitary hours were gladdened by the airs of the harp, which had stood unstrung and wrapt up in the corner of the room for about two years.

In this manner seven years passed away. Again and again had they each repeated their vows of constancy, by letters. But, as a personal interview might have involved Louisa in misery with respect to her father, it was deemed advisable by both to rest satisfied with an epistolary intercourse during all that period.

Some years of this period were spent by Dr. Spring upon the Continent with his noble patient, to whom travelling had been recommended. But, being at length freed from his charge by the hand of death, he returned by a circuitous route, of much interest to any one but a desponding lover, to his own country. The remarkable buoyancy of his disposition showed itself however at times, on his way homeward. In a cottage by Mont Blanc he sat for two or three days, and wrote an account of the insects and plants which he had discovered in his ascent to the top of it. Other times were employed in visiting the ancient abodes of poets, and statesmen, and philosophers, who had left a name behind them. Curiosity led him even to visit the scene of the labours of that extraordinary divine and philanthropist, Oberlin. The devotion with which the aged inhabitants of the place talked of their late pastor seemed to have had no small share in turning the mind of Dr. Spring to what had not before sufficiently engaged his attention—religion. As a science he had considered Christianity, but in no other light. He, consequently, reaped none of the benefits which are to be derived from it as it affects the principles of action, as it consoles the heart in its afflictions, as it regulates and tempers the affections, and as it restrains the unruly passions. This was his own view of the matter; and often have his friends heard him describe and

lament the mistake in this respect into which he, like too many of his profession, had fallen.

It was upon his return that the writer of these pages became acquainted with him. He had chosen as a place of residence a small house, in which he lodged, next door to mine. For several months nothing in the way of intercourse passed between us beyond a look at each other. At last he contrived to make an act of kindness which he wished to do for a poor woman, who had had his professional services for nothing, the ground of an introduction. An aversion, which it is needless here to account for, to become acquainted with a stranger, such as he was, had led me to avoid some slight overtures that had been before made to me of intimacy with him. This gradually decayed as I saw and knew more of the individual, who had appeared to me hitherto under very disadvantageous colours for himself. I soon found him to be a man of great talents and learning; and what probably helped to plant him more deeply in my regard, I found him labouring under a heavy depression, which originated in his notions of religion. At first I thought him an infidel; but this idea did not long continue. Yet his notions were of a very mixed sort. The desire of discovering something new and philosophical in the Scriptures had led him into an endless misconstruction of the text, and to the formation of the wildest views of the Christian system. The most simple things with him were converted into a mystery and a difficulty; his mode of interpretation acted in confounding his understanding to such a degree, that the more he read of the Bible the more he was bewildered.

Upon his application to me for the best remedy which I could recommend to one in such a condition, I put into his hands "Butler's Analogy." In a few weeks he had made himself perfect master of the argument of that great and difficult work; nor could anything exceed the interest which he took in studying its pages. Other books of a religious character he devoured with an equal avidity, till a more confirmed and sound member of the Church did not and could not exist.

As he considered himself indebted to me for much of the happiness of mind he now enjoyed, he dragged me by degrees into an acquaintance with his love-affair, as well as the other inci-

dents of his life which have been alluded to. I say *dragged*, for if there be anything in the affairs of another which a prudent man would wish to have kept from his knowledge, it is the subject of that person's loves. Louisa's name had become as familiar to me, though I had never seen her, as if she had been my own sister or wife. Petrarch may have written more beautiful, but certainly not more numerous, odes to the deity of his affections in the retreat of Vaucluse than Dr. Spring did to his Louisa, while he wandered over the mountains of Switzerland, and loitered in the cities of Italy. Every muse had been invoked, every poet of ancient days had been propitiated, to aid the inspiration which was to describe the virtues and paint the beauty of Louisa. These productions it became, as a matter of course, my duty to read; and though there was enough of genius and imagination in them to prevent languor and dullness from seizing the eye that perused them, I yet could not help sometimes wishing—for such is the monotony and similarity of all love-affairs—that the fire had had them to consume, rather than I to read.

When my acquaintance with Dr. Spring had attained its full height, he informed me that, as soon as the father of Louisa died, he hoped to be married to her. Nothing could persuade him of the possibility of any change in her affections towards him having taken place since he last saw her, though I did not think her later letters betokened a very high degree of attachment. The happy event which was to deliver them both from the miseries of a compulsory separation at length came. The old man died, and was buried, and——

About six in the morning in the month of April, I was awaked by a violent rapping at my door by Dr. Spring. He called to bid me good-by for awhile, as he was going up to town to arrange the time and circumstances of his marriage with Louisa. I never saw happiness more perfectly depicted than it was in the look of Dr. Spring at that moment. He held in his hand a letter from his beloved Louisa, acquainting him of the particulars of her father's death, and requesting him to attend the funeral. But, while he was dilating on the raptures which were before him, the coach drove up and carried him away from me, to muse alone with himself on his meeting at the end of his journey with

the object upon which all his thoughts were concentrated, and had been for so many years.

The journey only took four hours; yet, short as it was, and full of life and health as Dr. Spring was when he parted from my door at six in the morning, before he reached the place of his destination he had undergone a complete change. The first house he went to in London was that of his own father, who had resided there for some years in circumstances rather reduced. Aware that he would profit by his son's prosperity, and conscious of his own need of help, he saw, with no small emotion, the death of Louisa's father in the newspaper. But his joy was of short duration, for, instead of seeing his son in a situation to marry, he was doomed to behold him in the afflicting one of a maniac, fitted only for the society of the insane. Nor could hope, with all its flattery, betray the stricken old man into a momentary belief that his son's insanity was only of a temporary kind. He might have argued that, as none of his former kindred had ever been affected with such a disease, excitement might be the cause of his son's painful state, and that a few days might restore him to his former soundness. But no such consoling thought could arise in his breast to allay its troubles or its fears. It was but necessary to see the frantic eye, and listen to the distracted words of Dr. Spring, to perceive that his mind was a complete wreck. All recollection had expired. He appeared quite unconscious of what had brought him to London, and, after a very short stay with his father, set out again for the place he had been residing at in Sussex. He could not remain there long at liberty with safety, and so it was arranged among his friends that he should be sent to a madhouse, where he might be kept from taking away his own life, which he had frequently spoken of doing. There he remains at this hour, in the same deranged state as he appeared to his father, on his arrival in town, to be made, as he expected at starting, happy for life. Like other men in his situation, he can talk of his former friends and employments, at intervals, with as much fluency and accuracy as if he had the fullest use of his faculties. He can talk with all the energy of enthusiasm about the charms of his Louisa; he can write verses on her excellencies, and speak with calm sobriety on his future

marriage with her. Yet there are periods when the greatest vigilance is requisite to prevent him from dashing his brains out against the walls of his room, and when he would destroy the very persons who are set to hinder him from destroying himself. The slightest appearance of alteration for the better is not even hoped for by the medical attendants who have been consulted about his case. They all agree that his is a case of incurable insanity. They allow he may be able to exercise, to the astonishment of his friends, the greater part of the mental faculties, *separately*, as insane persons often, indeed generally, do to a surprising extent, but never to combine the operations of the mind so as to produce those results which are the peculiar proof and distinguishing effect of sanity.

Now, gentle reader, I do not profess to tell you how it comes to pass that love should be the cause of converting a wise and a learned and an accomplished man into a poor bedlamite. I merely vouch for the fact that love can and does, as is here shown, produce such an effect. And I would beg you further, kind reader, not to confound this cause with that of many foolish or giddy young women, weltering in the torrid zones of their teens, who are either jilted by the dear objects of their attachment, or bereft of them by the untimely stroke of death. In this case, Dr. Spring loved Louisa, and Louisa loved Dr. Spring most cordially and sincerely. His affection had stood the test of at least ten years; hers had stood the same test of time, and the offers of two baronets and a peer. Suspicion, or fear, or disappointment could therefore have no place in his breast, no share in causing the derangement of his mind. He left his home in the morning to receive into his arms the woman of his deepest adoration, in perfect health of mind and body; but the thought of transport was too great, and had been too long pent up. It proved too strong for him, and, before noon, like an overloaded gun, it burst and destroyed the thing that contained it.

P.S.—A month has elapsed since the foregoing was written; and during that month the life of Dr. Spring has terminated. The news of his death has just been communicated to me. For two weeks previous to his death—which was accelerated by no violence on his part—it appears that he enjoyed the most per-

fect composure of mind. He talked to the keeper of the house of his faith and hope in strains of fervour and delight but seldom heard there. No doubt preyed upon his spirits or shook his belief, that, when he died, he should enter upon another state of existence, such as the Bible reveals, and such as conscience either looks to with joy or fear. And with words of sober desire, that mercy might be extended to his departing spirit, he closed his eyes in resignation to the Almighty's will, in peace with all on earth, but the memory of his former errors, the worn-out victim of love.

*March*, 1836.

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# MARIAMNE.

## A FRAGMENT OF A STORY.

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"I tell a tale of sadness—and of shame!"

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"MARIAMNE, it must be to-morrow."

"Nay, nay, dearest Edmund, grant me but one other day to look upon the innocent proof of guilt?"

"It cannot be, Mariamne; the blight of mortality will be upon him ere then, and why feed the canker in that dear heart longer on morbid unavailing sorrow? To morrow it must be."

"Oh! Edmund, grant me but a little respite; I cannot—cannot yet see him go down to the grave. Oh! to commit his little form to a cold bed of ice and snow, when I had hoped this bosom would have been his resting-place for years!"

"Mariamne, these regrets are natural, are honourable, are amiable; but they have no power over time and corruption. Answer me not again; to-morrow, half-an-hour before the gates shut, I will be here, with all that may be necessary—farewell, dear Mariamne, farewell!"

The next day set in with a still intenser cold than before, accompanied with strong gales from the north, that swept over the level plains of frozen waters with inconceivable force and keenness. At the appointed time I left my lodgings, bearing under my cloak a small box of elm and the Book of Common Prayer, and proceeded to Mariamne; on entering her sitting-room, I looked round it for her in vain, and it was not until after some time that I found her in a corner of her inner room bathed in

tears, and wrapt in a half stupor of grief. At first she did not perceive me; but, on my laying my hand upon her arm, and calling her by her name, she rose gently, and, laying her hands upon my shoulders, wept upon my neck — while I, in utter reverence to the piety of her tears, demurred ere I ventured to kiss the fair cheek that was presented to me in modesty, gratitude, and silence. Thus we stood for some minutes, till Mariamne broke the stillness in a low murmuring voice of woe, that made the darkness and the occasion doubly dreary.

"Oh! Edmund," said the poor sorrowing girl, "oh! my kind generous Edmund, how have I tasked you for this night—this bitter, bitter night—bitterer even than that in which I woke to guilt—bitterer even than that which bore his little unscathed soul from the contamination of his wretched mother—nay, bitterer than that in which I shall stand in shame and dishonour before the face of him who led me up the path of life with affectionate and pious counsels. Look! look, Edmund, on the sweet little innocent's face—look on it, Edmund, and depict it to me in after-days, when the worm has despoiled my rosebud — Oh! my God, my God! Well, I 'll be calm; but who could think, to look upon that little angel countenance, that it could ever bring sorrow with it! See, Edmund, his tiny fingers—once they played upon my bosom, and their little motions soothed it. Oh! that they should return me no pressure now! Oh! that those lips, those eyes should give me no one look or kiss to comfort my broken heart in its desolation! You never saw him, Edmund, when he used to look up from my heart to my face, and stay his little meal to smile at me, and coo his little happiness like a dove — and yes, yes! he might have lived to be what his —— what others of his sex are, and then could I still have loved him; he might have lived, too, to despise his mother for her frailty—but no, no! that is a bitter thought—I would have nurtured him so kindly, that he dare not have done that!"

"Mariamne," said I, interrupting her, "you are wearing yourself out, and you have yet much to go through—be comforted; those whom the gods love best die young."

"And therefore," answered she, "do I live—live on, and cannot die."

"Speak not thus, Mariamne," I replied; "but be thankful to God for his mercies, and be calm."

"Yes, yes!" she said, "I am thankful; at least I will try to be so, and I can now be calm."

"Then leave me, Mariamne, but for a few minutes."

"Leave you—leave you, Edmund! and for what? Would you, too, play me false? I know you would filch this innocent clay from me, but you shall not—he shall not be laid in the earth to-night; he shall receive my tears this one night more; shall he not, dear Edmund? Hear, hear how the wind roars, and the snow comes down in frozen lumps!—you would not, could not, give him to the grave on such a night—don't, Edmund—don't, dear, dear, kind Edmund!" and she placed her arms round me, and laid her cheek to mine, and there was silence while our tears commingled.

"Be still, Mariamne," I said, as I led her, drooping and silent, into the inner room; "your honour, and peace, and happiness are all I consult, whatever I do—be calm, or at least remain here, and pray that you may be so. No answer, Mariamne; my purpose is as unalterable as it is necessary;" and I left her sinking meekly on her knees, to seek the God she had forsaken and offended.

On returning to the other room, I commenced my melancholy preparations. The box I had brought with me was to be the last habitation of the little innocent relic of mortality that lay before me. It was the first time I had looked on death, and calm and beautiful to a troubled mind, from its calmness, as it appeared to me, I yet shuddered to contemplate it: it is a weakness inherent in our system from education, and the world will be better and braver when we are taught in childhood to look with nerve on the most harmless of all objects—inanimate humanity. Tears of sorrow, and tears of pity, trickled down my cheeks; and why did they? what was there here to grieve for, if we could rid our nature of its selfish dross? Some childish smiles—some little infantile prattle—some few playful gambols—some accession to the momentary happiness, that is all that ever has been mine—were here denied me. But what were these, compared with all that was spared to this poor infant—the unrequited

affection—the broken friendship—the faithless promises—the heart's ache, the spirit's suffering, and the body's pain—the cold blight that falls from day to day upon the meek, till it cankers the existence, or the sudden foils that fall roughly and bluntly on the resolves of the bold—the pains that flesh and spirit both are heir to—all, all were spared to him; and yet I grieved, and Mariamne sorrowed madly. Why is this, metaphysicians, churchmen, or schoolmen? Expound to me the rationale of the vagaries of the human mind; and I, too, will have faith in you.

Poor Mariamne, meanwhile, was loud in her supplications to Eternity; and in her sobs—little as the world had given her of joy, and much of woe, as had been her undue lot—she could mourn the short existence of her woe-born progeny.

When I had completed all but the last efforts of my task—all but for ever closing the light of the world on the lifeless clay, I sought her, and kissing the heart's-dew from her cheek, raised and conducted her, trembling and faint, to the humble bier I had prepared. Lowly and sorrowfully, and silently, we bent over it, and our tears fell fast and thick upon it—then, placing it on the floor, we knelt by its side, and, as well as I was able, I read over the unchristened babe the sublime service which the Church of England would have denied it; that ended, Mariamne kissed the fair corpse with convulsive sorrow, then, throwing herself on the sofa, hid her beautiful face and wept, while, with infirm hand, I ended the act I had commenced.

With heavy but hurried steps, we wound along the ramparts and issued through the East gate—oh, it was a bitter and fearful night!—heaven seemed to denounce us and our task! It was February. The frost had already reigned four months with uninterrupted keenness, and the snow had fallen some feet within the last twenty-four hours, and was still falling thickly and rapidly, while a cold, loud, biting gale blew it in freezing clouds into our faces; it was perfectly dark too, and the ways so choked that it required us often to halt on our painful journey, to enable us to regain the road we had strayed from, and which was now only to be known by the little height the drift left it above the plains that skirted it. It was late before we arrived at the plantation where our task was to conclude. I had on the previous

night prepared the grave; but the snow and frost had since then destroyed all traces of my work. Resting the coffin on the ground, therefore, I hastily struck a light, and commenced a search among the trees for some marks I had cut in them to guide me, which having at length found, I left the lanthorn on the spot to direct me on my return, and hastened back to Mariamne. The poor girl was in an almost lifeless torpor from cold, sorrow, and fatigue, but even in it the loved remains were pressed to her aching bosom, and cherished by her arms from the air. I called upon her, but she could make me no answer. I looked in her face; the paleness of death was there, and her eyes were closed—but she breathed.

"My God!" said I, madly, "not all—not all at one fell swoop!" and, releasing the box from her embrace, I chafed her hands and temples with snow till she again showed signs of animation, and at length recovered, when I put round her the cloak which I had hitherto worn to conceal my burden. So soon as she could speak, she implored me to leave her.

"Oh, let me die, dear Edmund!" she exclaimed, faintly; "it would have been mercy to have let me glide into eternity with my babe in my arms!—I cannot, indeed, go on!—I cannot witness it!—Receive my blessing with my last breath, and the thanks and deepest gratitude of a broken heart; but oh! let me die here, and now, and be laid with my babe!"

"Nay, nay, dear Mariamne!" I answered; "Rise, rise! take my arm, and let us move forward. You must live—I hope, long and happily;—but you must live to make peace for your broken and contrite spirit, for the sake of those to whom you are yet most dear. Come—let me assist you—the night wears apace, and the storm is coming stronger. Come, Mariamne, have hope and courage!" and with the coffin slung round me, I supported her almost unmoving frame to the sad spot.

"Sit here, Mariamne, on this tree," I said, "while I seek to complete what is wanting."

"No, Edmund!" she answered; "I will kneel and pray for blessings on you, and forgiveness for myself!" And, in spite of my entreaties, she knelt down, hardly suffering me to place my Fries capote between her and the snow, and prayed, and sobbed out the teemings of a warm though withering heart.

Long was it ere I could rid the earth of its inclement covering, and prepare the narrow house of death for its young and guiltless tenant; but I accomplished it, and, sighing one deep sigh over it, and shedding one cold tear into it, I turned to Mariamne, who gazed through her devotions unseeingly upon my work.

"It is done, now!" said I; "It is done!"

"Done!" said she, dreamingly. "Oh God, then, the moment is come! Farewell, my bootless, lifeless care! Farewell, my dearly-loved, dearer-bought, child of sorrow and guilt!—my hope, my shame, my joy, and my disgrace!—Farewell!—Never again will the sun play upon thy little brow of innocence—thou art Death's! and the grave and corruption will soon be thine!—but at least the world cannot now point at thee, and taunt thee with thy mother's frailty!—Thou art saved the pangs of living on the charity of Hatred, and being a mark in the world for the cold and the vain!—Farewell!—Thy spirit is with its kindred angels; and the chill of the world's neglect, colder far than the cold bed that will enwrap thy little frame, will never fall upon it!—But oh, it is bitter, bitter, to miss thee from this breast that has borne so much for thee!—But it is bursting!—it is bursting!—my poor babe!—and I will rejoin thee, and we will be separated no more! Death cannot pass the grave!—Yes! I will nurture thee again in these arms, and see thy smiles, and love thee—and watch over thee—where the world cannot rail, nor the finger of scorn be pointed!"

"For God's sake, Mariamne!" I exclaimed, "be calm!" for I feared she was raving. "Morning will soon be here—let us finish!" And she answered me, coldly and wildly—"Be it so!" Then I knelt by her side, and, placing the coffin on the brink of the grave, we laid our hands on it; and, amid the roaring of the wind—the hissing of the snow as it was blown among the trees, and the groans of the disconsolate mother—I prayed a short prayer in poor Mariamne's own Frieslandic—"Amen!" I said, and she tried to repeat it, but her voice failed her; and, while I lowered the little ark into its cold chamber, and hastily covered it with the frozen mould and snow, Mariamne, the most beautiful of the Friesland relics of the Grecian women, fell senseless on my bosom, and was pressed, unconscious, to a heart bleeding and breaking for her.

# THE CURATE OF LANGBOURN.

THE rays of the autumn sun fell cheerfully on the fields around Langbourn, as the curate of the village, Mr. Benson, set out on the path leading from his humble dwelling. For some time he walked onwards with downcast eyes, and, from the expression of his pale and thoughtful countenance, it was evident that a tinge of melancholy pervaded his meditations. The road to the mansion of his rector, whither he was now proceeding, was a by-path, intersecting rich and well-cultivated fields, in which the reapers were prosecuting joyously the labours of the harvest. Their clear ringing voices, and noisy peals of laughter, aroused the curate from his abstraction, and he felt as if the light-hearted sounds chid him for the pensive character of his own thoughts. "The Almighty," said he, "has sent a good and plenteous season, that his creatures, the high and the low alike, may have wherewithal to eat; and even the red-breast that chirps across my path shall have its portion. Want has hitherto been mercifully withheld from crossing my threshold, and poverty has been too long an inmate of the dwelling to make its continuance a thing to be dreaded. Alas! how unwilling is my tongue to utter, or my heart to admit, that there is a deeper cause for the heaviness that oppresses me! Mary, my beloved child, it is thy fading cheek and drooping spirits that my soul would fain exclude the knowledge of from itself, for the temporal comforts and means that might revive thee are not in my power!" Uttering a pious wish for the object of his anxiety, and beseeching resignation to his

own mind, the curate walked onwards to the abode of his superior.

Before relating the purpose and tenor of the interview between the rector and the curate, we may describe briefly to the reader these personages themselves. The rector was a man of a portly presence, haughty and grave, even to sternness, in his address. His origin was humble, for he was the son of a poor tradesman, and the presentation to the livings he now enjoyed had been the result of a long service as tutor in a family of rank. Though thus meanly descended, the rector was a proud man; and his first object on acquiring the rectory had been to unite himself with a well-connected lady, who, though considerably beyond her prime, formed a bond between her husband and the families of rank in the neighbourhood. Still the churchman did not fully attain his object, for, though elevated in station in his own eyes, and even in those of his inferiors, by the marriage, those with whom he was most anxious to mingle were not conciliated, by his personal merits, to overlook the humility of his native rank. This was unfortunate for him in more than one respect; those with whom he might have formerly associated he now considered himself elevated above; and, not being admitted freely to the higher class of society, he stood in some measure in a lonely and even solitary position. His lady was not of an age to enliven his home with children, and by degrees the temper of the rector, which was naturally social, became haughty and soured. He was by no means uncharitable, but his charities were sadly affected by prejudices; and he had imbibed, during his intercourse with the higher classes, the doctrine that poverty is indispensable, and indeed a blessing, to the lower orders of society, in every well-regulated state. Mr. Benson, the curate, was in many respects a contrast to his rector. He was modest, amiable, and intelligent, and was beloved and esteemed by the inhabitants of Langbourn. He was the immediate descendant of a family that had been of considerable importance in the neighbourhood; and this circumstance, together with his general character, made him respected even in quarters which his superior could not propitiate. An early love-marriage had prevented his struggling, like his fellows, for advancement in the church, and had made

him glad to take refuge from want in a curacy of thirty-five pounds a-year. His wife died without leaving any family, and the curate took into his home a widowed sister and her only child, to whom he was deeply attached. His niece, Mary Warner, was now about the age of eighteen, a slender and elegantly-formed young woman, with one of the sweetest and most expressive of countenances, the index to her amiable mind. She had lately been residing for some time with an aunt at a considerable distance, and, since her return home, had, to the great distress of her fond uncle and parent, drooped both in health and spirits. Never had the curate felt the narrowness of his income so severely, as when it limited his means of procuring necessary comforts for his beloved niece. Mr. Benson was on his way to the rectory to receive his half-yearly pittance, and it grieved him to think how small a balance would be left of it after the payment of the debts already incurred.

On reaching the rector's goodly though old-fashioned mansion, buried in venerable woods, which the rooks had for centuries held as their peculiar domain, the curate was shown by one of the servants into an ante-chamber, with a promise that his reverence should be informed of the visitor's presence. Some minutes elapsed before the servant re-appeared, in which time Mr. Benson, on looking around him, could not help contrasting the duties of the rector with his own, and the difference in the reward. The thought, however, was rebuked as quickly as it arose, and he uttered a prayer that his reward might be, not temporal, but spiritual and eternal. He was at length ushered into the presence of his superior. "Sit down, sit down, Mr. Benson," said the rector; "I hope your family are well. Pray excuse me for keeping you waiting; my wife's cousin, Sir John Oatlands, had called, and we were engaged in sipping a glass of port. Here, Peter, bring a glass of wine for Mr. Benson." The rector had acquired a taste for good wine during his tutorship, and was really a critical judge of its merits. The poor curate sighed almost audibly as he raised the glass placed before him to his lips, and thought of the dear one whose declining health such a cordial might revive, while to him it was useless as it was undesired. The rector continued to descant on the subject

of his visitor and relation, Sir John, and the qualities of the wine, to all which the curate listened patiently. At last, on mention being made of the business for which Mr. Benson came, his reverence said, "Thirty-five pounds is a large sum, sir; and, with the other perquisites, constitutes, altogether, I have no doubt, a handsome enough living. Indeed, Mr. Benson, I have just had an offer from a young man, a very valuable person, to perform the duty for thirty pounds." The curate was too much struck with this announcement to make any reply. The thought had sometimes occurred to him, that, could he overcome his pride so far as to inform the rector how much need there was of an augmentation of salary, it was possible that it might be granted by that gentleman, as the duties of the curacy were more extensive than usual. This hope had taken a deeper hold of his mind than he himself was sensible of, till it was thus overthrown, and the prospect of losing his present pittance, small as it was, presented in its stead. The rector probably saw the depression his words had caused, and he proceeded to say, "This must be thought of, Mr. Benson; in the meantime, you, of course, will go on with your duties; we may speak of the reduction at some future time." The servant had been called into the room previous to this last speech, and his master directed him to pay the salary to Mr. Benson. He then left the room, imagining, no doubt, that he had acted charitably in not pressing an immediate reduction; a view of the subject certainly not coincided in by the other party concerned.

The rector derived his information regarding the affairs of the parish, both clerical and laical, chiefly from the lips of inferior functionaries, to whose purposes and projects Mr. Benson's integrity had often proved a barrier. The perquisites attached to the curacy were insignificant, and the rector had been maliciously misinformed on the subject. As the curate pursued his walk homewards, in deeper depression than before, he thought with regret of having permitted this impression to remain on the mind of his superior, and resolved to explain it away, if possible, at an early opportunity, either personally or in writing. His mind then reverted to his sister and niece, and he reached his home with a load on his spirits which he in vain endeavoured to dispel.

The curate's dwelling was a low whitewashed cottage, consisting, internally, of two small rooms, with sleeping-apartments attached to them. In the parlour, at the moment of Mr. Benson's return, sat Mary and her mother, engaged in some feminine occupation. The cloud on her uncle's brow was soon observed by the niece, and she sat down by him, anxiously inquiring at the same time if he were well. The curate parted the locks from her fair and high forehead, and kissed her affectionately before he answered her question. "Were you well, dearest, little care would affect me; but, as long as your cheek is pale and thin, Mary, so long must I be ill at ease. You take no adequate support, and seem, indeed, in the condition which the poets describe as characteristic of true love unrewarded." He spoke this in a playful tone of reproach, without observing the effects of his language. Mary blushed, and became pale alternately; and an accurate observer might have believed that the analogy pointed out, unsuspectingly, by the curate was not far from the truth. This might have even occurred to himself, unsuspicious as he was, had not an interruption occurred from the delivery of a letter by a boy at the cottage door. The curate read it attentively, and simply saying that he was under the necessity of going to the village, rose, and left the house.

The letter which the curate received ran as follows:—"To the curate of Langbourn—Sir, I take the freedom of addressing you, for a reason that can only be explained on a personal interview, which I beg of you most earnestly to grant me as early as your convenience will permit.—A Stranger." The messenger brought it from the village inn, and there an answer was expected by the writer. It can scarcely be said that the circumstance excited much curiosity in the mind of Mr. Benson, though the handwriting was that of an educated person, and such was not the common way in which ordinary tales of distress came to the benevolent curate's ear. His mind, however, was fully preoccupied with the disheartening prospects held out in the interview with the rector. Before proceeding to the inn, he resolved to pay a visit to the tradesmen who supplied his family with necessaries, and discharge their several accounts. As he reached, with this intent, the door of the village butcher, he heard his own

name mentioned within, and, not desirous of hearing either evil or good of himself, stept into the house at once. The party conversing with the butcher was the rector's servant, who, after hastily saluting the curate, left the place. The master of the shop was a man of very middling character, and no favourite of Mr. Benson's; a circumstance the former knew well enough, but which the absence of any rivals in his trade entitled him, in his own opinion, to disregard. After the account was settled, the curate was about to take his leave, when his attention was arrested by some words muttered indistinctly, and with some degree of embarrassment, by the butcher, regarding future payments. On being asked, the man, recovering his usual unblushing confidence, repeated what he had said; and the curate found, to his dismay, that the babbling servant of the rector had overheard the conversation at the rectory respecting the reduction of salary, the repetition of which to the butcher had produced an unwillingness to give the usual credit. "God pity and help my poor sister, and Mary, if others should act with me like this man!" thought Mr. Benson to himself, as he left the shop in silence.

None of the other tradesmen, to whom the curate gave the sums they were entitled to, repeated the conduct or sentiments of the butcher; but the anxious fears of the clergyman suggested that this forbearance might be owing to their ignorance of the same circumstances. After the last account was discharged, the curate found himself with little of his salary remaining, and with melancholy prospects of the future. In this state he still remembered that his services were required, and, uttering a hope internally, that the distress—for distress he was prepared to find—might not be pecuniary, he entered the little inn of Langbourn. The boy, who had been the bearer of the letter, appeared to be in waiting for him, and conducted him up stairs, where, opening the door of a small apartment, he merely uttered the words "The curate, sir," to a person within, and then retired. The stranger was seated at a table, from which he immediately rose. He was a young man, apparently not above two or three-and-twenty, with a tall and handsome person, and a countenance strikingly open and beautiful. The blush with which he met his

visitor heightened the ingenuousness of his look, and his manner had an air of breeding and refinement, which appeared in despite of the faded dress which he wore. "I have to apologise, sir," said he to the curate, "for the great liberty I have taken, though it will appear greater when I state to you its object." Respectfully handing a chair to Mr. Benson, and begging him to seat himself, the stranger continued. "I am at present, sir, in a situation which makes me blush for the imprudence that has placed me in it, and made such an explanation as this necessary. It is requisite that you should know all the circumstances which led to this unfortunate situation. My father was a general officer in the army, who fell in battle when I was a child, and was followed to the grave soon after by my mother. My father's elder and only brother, who possessed the family estate, was the guardian to whom the dying lips of my mother consigned me, and never was charge so affectionately executed. My uncle was unmarried, and, having some family pride in his disposition, brought me up as he thought the heir of his estates, and the supporter of the name, ought to be. He was but too kind to me, and, since my boyhood, has striven to gratify my wishes in every respect. This generated in me habits of paying too much deference to my own will, and too little to that of others, and rational lookers-on would have called me, I am afraid, a spoilt child. After returning from the university, I took up my residence for some time in the country, with my uncle, intending speedily to set out upon my travels. Here occurred the circumstances which were the origin of my first disputes with my kind uncle, and which have caused me to be here, but which still, in some respects, I never can regret. Near my uncle's residence is a small village, which, in my rides and walks around the neighbourhood, I had frequent occasion to pass through. I met there, while calling accidentally at the house of a friend, a young lady, whose beauty struck me indescribably at the first view. I will not endeavour to paint to you the charms of mind and disposition which I found her, on further knowledge, to possess; suffice it to say, that the impression made by them is not, and never can be, erased from my heart. I often visited the family in which she resided, and indulged for some time

in a species of dream, from which I was rudely awakened by my uncle's discovery of the object of my visits to the village. He commanded me to give up an attachment so derogatory to the dignity of the family. The irritated state of my uncle's feelings constrained me to put some guard upon my own. I withdrew from his presence in silence, but it was only to seek that presence where alone I felt happiness. You will pardon me these expressions, sir, for I am still a lover. I could not conceal from the object of my affection what had occurred, and the tear which dimmed her lovely eyes, grieved, at the same time that it charmed me. This was the first time that my heart was satisfied that my passion was returned; and, though the proof was given at the very moment that she was exhorting me to forget her for ever, it gave me consolation even then. She bade me farewell, and I have never again seen her. Her residence in the village was, I should have informed you, merely temporary, and when I returned on the following day to her relation's house, I found that she had taken her departure, and had, besides, directed her friends, as her peace of mind was valued, not to acquaint me with her home, which, during the brief entrancement of our love, I had not been informed of, though I knew the position in life of her friends to be respectable. I returned to my uncle's house in despair, and angry words passed between my kind relation and myself. In short, sir, instead of remaining to attempt to pacify and reconcile my uncle to what I felt to be necessary to my happiness, I was imprudent enough to leave his house with the determination not to return to it. I wandered about the country for some time, hoping always that a chance meeting might occur with her I loved; but this romantic idea never was gratified. The money I had taken with me being expended, and pride and other causes still making the idea of returning home odious to me, I was forced, for mere subsistence, to join myself a few days ago to a band of strolling players. We arrived at this inn last night, and this morning I found that my companions had disappeared early, leaving the burden of their night's expenses upon myself. But I also found in this paper," lifting it from the table, "what grieved me much more. Here is an advertisement, informing me of my uncle's illness, and en-

treating my return, at the same time declaring that all my wishes shall be gratified." The curate had listened with much interest to the stranger's story, and took the newspaper handed to him. After reading the advertisement, he said, "I hope, sir, you have no other intention but to return as soon as possible to your family." "Most assuredly I shall," said the stranger; "the cause which detains me for a moment from the road thither is the necessity of paying the sum required by the people of the house. If you do me this favour, sir, you will make me ever grateful for permitting me to go where my presence will bring comfort." The curate rose without reply, and, motioning the stranger to keep his seat, left the room. On his return, Mr. Benson mentioned to the young man that the necessary sum was paid, and with the freedom of a clergyman and a senior, gave him some paternal and kindly admonition; at the same time pointing out the extreme impropriety of conduct of which he had been guilty, and the misery that almost invariably follows the course of life into which he had recklessly plunged. He whom he addressed, like the repentant prodigal, was deeply affected, even to tears, by the friendliness of the tone and counsel, and said, when the curate ceased, "I shall neither forget your counsel, sir, nor the obligation you have conferred on a stranger, one, indeed, who does not know the name of his benefactor. I as yet know you, and have heard of you, by no other name than that of the curate. My own name is Norton, Charles Norton, with the bearer of which I hope you will yet be further acquainted." The curate gave his name in return, and requested Mr. Norton, before leaving the village, to visit his residence, advising him at the same time to defer his departure till next morning, as the day was far advanced. After a promise to this effect, the curate and Mr. Norton parted.

"The rector, and every thing connected with his own circumstances, were for a while obliterated from Mr. Benson's mind by the interest excited by the young stranger's story; and such is the pleasing effect that a benevolent action, however trifling in itself, leaves on the mind of the doer, that the depression of his spirits did not return in the same degree of severity. On entering his home, he was affectionately reproached for neglecting his

usual meal, but warded off the censure, by stating, after satisfying his hunger, that he had a tale to tell for their gratification. Even Mary's languor was dissipated for the time by the tidings; but when the curate commenced the narration, the attention of the young lady soon changed to strong emotion. "Out of delicacy," said Mr. Benson, when he came to the stranger's falling in love, "I did not inquire the name of the lady, nor did he mention it, but his own name is Charles Norton"—— Mary uttered not a word, but, in a fainting condition, let her head fall upon the shoulder of her mother. "I see it all," exclaimed the curate, as the idea flashed across his mind, which may already have been in our reader's; "it is our own Mary of whom I have been speaking!" Resting her head upon her mother's bosom, she confessed, at their anxious entreaties, that she was the unfortunate object of Charles Norton's love, and that she had concealed the circumstances from them, to spare their feelings, and hoping that time would remove the impression left upon her mind. Her uncle and mother were filled with anxiety for her, and prevailed upon her to go to rest immediately, which she only consented to, on hearing the issue of the story from the curate.

The curate deliberated long and earnestly with his sister that night, whether it would be proper to admit Norton's visit in the morning, after what had come to their knowledge. The result was, that a letter was dispatched to him at an early hour, stating plainly what Mr. Benson had learnt since their interview, and declining a visit at that moment, on account of the possible danger from an agitating meeting to Mary, who had not been informed that he was still in the village. The note was written in friendly but decided language, and a brief and hurried reply was returned by Charles Norton, expressing deep anxiety for Mary's health, and at the same time hoping, that, though it might be improper to receive him at present, he might be permitted, at no distant date, to see one so dear to him, and whom he had so long desired to see in vain.

Nothing was heard by the curate's family of him on whom the happiness of its most beloved member depended, till a few weeks after the circumstances we have related, when a letter, with a black seal, arrived for Mr. Benson. It was from Charles Norton,

and contained an account of his uncle's death, which the writer stated to have been occasioned, according to the opinion of the attending surgeons, by confirmed dropsy of many years' standing. This had relieved the writer's mind, he said, of a great load. "As soon as circumstances will permit," continued the letter, "I shall visit Langbourn, when I hope to be allowed to visit my dear Mary, and offer her myself, and all I have in the world." Need we add, that Mary's cheek soon recovered its bloom, and that a few months afterwards she became the wife of the object of her early and only affection. In the comforts, also, of a moderate living, to which he was presented by Mr. Norton, and in the happiness of seeing the children of his beloved Mary spring up like olive plants around him, the curate of Langbourn forgot the unfriendly bearing of the rector, and his threatened reduction of salary.

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# FANNY FAIRFIELD.

"This is the prettiest low-born lass that ever
Ran on the greensward." WINTER'S TALE.

FANNY FAIRFIELD was as pretty a girl as you should see on a summer day; and as good a girl—and as clever a one. Alas! —but for *that*—that fatal gift of an uncommon capacity, she might have been as happy as she was fair and good.

How much especially does it behove the discoverers and fosterers of early genius in the lower classes of society to take thought for the future, before they assume the responsibility of patronage; to consider well how far it may be for the real welfare of the youthful object of their solicitude to bring forward intellectual qualities of a refined and imaginative character, the high cultivation of which may be incompatible with the cheerful fulfilment of humble duties in that station of life in which it has pleased Providence to place them. And if, in the fervour of benevolent enthusiasm, they assure themselves that they shall be influentially successful in transplanting the lowly flower from its cottage shade and shelter, to expand in the full sunshine of public notice and favour, do they even then make provision for the uncertain duration of that sunshine—for the fleeting nature of popular encouragement—the instability of fashionable favour? Alas! even for the slackening of zealous kindness—the cooling of generous impulses—and that revulsion of feeling into which they commonly subside, resulting in weariness, indifference, and neglect.

The early benefactress of Fanny Fairfield (true and fitting *Helpmeet* to the venerable Rector of Holywell) *had* well and wisely revolved these matters in her mind; and, though she failed not to notice with discriminating interest the indications of peculiar intelligence, and even early poetic talent, in her little scholar — almost the youngest child of the parish-school, of which, before the general organisation of national schools, Mrs. Clifford was the unwearying and judicious superintendent, and most efficient patroness—she repressed the impulse which would have led her to indulge her own taste and feeling by drawing forth and encouraging the uncommon powers of the lovely and engaging child, whose lot in life had been appointed by Providence among the lowly—the poor—and the laborious.

But though Mrs. Clifford, so actuated, abstained from all but the most cautious encouragement of her young pupil's imaginative powers, far from her was the narrow-minded prejudice, which supposes safety in ignorance alone, and refuses the means of acquiring useful and saving knowledge to any rational and accountable creature. To imbue the mind of the little Fanny with that wisdom from above, the highest and holiest, adapted to all states, and attainable by all capacities, was the first and most strenuous aim of her kind benefactress; her endeavour, in the second instance, to induce habits of order, neatness, and industry; to which valuable qualifications, it must be confessed, the small damsel's natural propensities did by no means "seriously incline." And, although Mrs. Clifford did not think it expedient to exclude all instructions in writing from her system of teaching the children of the labouring poor, she was of opinion, that a slight knowledge of penmanship was sufficient in most cases, and, especially in little Fanny's, she judged it requisite to repress for a time the scribbling propensities of which she gave early indication, having, indeed, contrived to frame a set of characters of her own peculiar fashion, partly imitated from printed letters, and partly from the copy-books of her older schoolmates, that served to commit the teeming fancies of her busy brain to such scraps of paper—whity-brown and other—as she could make prize of, and, in default of that article, to the slates of her

schoolfellows, and the blank leaves and margins of her school-books.

It had cost Mrs. Clifford more than one effort of self-denial to look severely serious, instead of delighted, on detecting these outbreakings of precocious talent. But if, from an overruling sense of duty, she forbore to give mischievous encouragement to the fanciful essays of the little maiden, neither did she feel it incumbent on her to repress them with harshness or ridicule, or, while she inculcated lessons of humility and homely usefulness, to refuse herself at all times the enjoyment of listening to some little hymn, or simple ballad, recited in those sweet infantine tones which (modulated by feeling) thrill to the heart with such peculiar pathos.

There were times when the lovely and engaging child stood thus bashfully before her, or when, in the course of her circumscribed lessons, she evinced feelings and capabilities of a more refined and higher order than fell to the share of her companions and schoolmates, that the kind lady, to whose long and happy union with a beloved husband Providence had refused the crowning gift of children, could not repress the thoughts and wishes that stole into her heart. Thoughts of the rich source of interest she might open to herself by taking the little peasant girl to be to her even as a daughter; and training her up, not only to be the comfort of her own declining years, but, possibly, to adorn some station in life where the mental gifts, with which nature had so eminently endowed her, might blossom more kindly, and bear fruit more abundantly, than in the stinting soil of laborious poverty. But Mrs. Clifford suffered not these floating reveries to assume a more definite form. On the life preferment of the good vicar (her senior by many years) depended the far greater part of their confined income; and, had her pecuniary means been less restricted, scruples of a more serious nature would probably have withheld her from the indulgence of her natural longing. But she promised herself, in compensation, the pleasant task of promoting the best and highest interests of the little Fanny, and her well-doing, in the humble sphere appointed for her.

And happy had it been for the young cottager, if the kind and judicious patronage, to which her childhood owed so much, had

been prolonged to the more trying season of early womanhood. But it was otherwise decreed. The good vicar died; and his widow, bidding a final adieu to the home no longer hers, and the scene of her past happiness and usefulness, departed to seek a distant and humble asylum in the neighbourhood of her own kindred. Bitter and passionate was the grief of the little Fanny at parting with her kind and beloved instructress. Almost she could have cried out in the bitterness of her heart—clasping the knees of her benefactress—"Oh! take me with you to be your servant." But Fanny was a good and dutiful as well as a tender-hearted child, and she loved her poor parents, and her two young brothers, and her old blind grandmother; and now, in her thirteenth year, she had become in many ways useful and helpful in the little household, and—all was as it should be in her young heart. She would have followed her benefactress over the world, cleaving to her as Ruth to Naomi, but for those whom nature pleaded for still more powerfully, binding her to her home and to her duty.

The new incumbent of Holywell, a young unmarried man, entered upon his pastoral charge with a becoming sense of the responsibility he assumed with it, and seriously purposing faithfully to discharge its duties. But the zeal of the inexperienced is not often according to knowledge, and the loss of their late pastor, and his excellent helpmate, was long felt in the parish of Holywell, and comparisons, for the most part invidious and unfair, were instituted to the disadvantage of his amiable and well-meaning, but inexperienced, successor. Among the results of the ministerial change, one of the most to be regretted was the falling off, which was soon apparent, in the conducting of the parish schools, and especially in the order and system which had been so admirably kept up in the girls' school, under Mrs. Clifford's management; and the young vicar, aware of the deterioration, and anxious, by every means in his power, to arrest the growing evil, took, as he conceived, the most effectual measures to that end, by enlisting a number of the neighbouring ladies as patronesses, visitors, etc., etc. His canvass was most successful, and the young minister, whose interesting exterior of course assisted not in the slightest degree his powers of persuasion, soon

found himself in a situation of delicate embarrassment among the number of fair aspirants, all suddenly inflamed with educating zeal, and as eager to preside over the classes of the village school as female fashionables of a still later day are to turn shop-women at fancy fairs, exhibiting their pretty persons as liberally as their trumpery wares; fleecing their friends, and ruining those whose humble situations they usurp; and all for charity! Truly, if charity covereth a multitude of sins, it serveth also for a cloak to all imaginable and unimaginable devices.

It was a pleasant thing to look into Mark Fairfield's cottage on the evening of the Sabbath day, immediately after the family had finished their frugal supper. The aged woman, as beseemed her years, in the seat of honour; an old high-backed arm-chair, its voluted oak legs and framework blackened by Time, which had turned to orange-tawny the once-gorgeous scarlet covering of the stuffed back and sides. The two little fair-haired boys, nestling on each side the venerable parent—her withered hand often resting on one of their young heads—and each in the accustomed place; the father and mother, dwelling with deep and delighted attention on the accents of their little daughter's youthful voice, as, standing with reverential stillness in the midst of the kindred circle, she read aloud the portion of Scripture selected by her father after he had done catechising his younger children. Then that small sweet pipe, modulated to a more thrilling sweetness, gave out, with distinct seriousness, the verses of the Psalm or Hymn, and every voice chimed in, making the melody—

> "Compared with *which* Italian trills are tame;
> The tickled ears no heartfelt raptures raise;
> Nae unison hae they wi' our Creator's praise."

And, last of all, when the general devotional exercise was concluded, little Fanny, at a well-understood smile of encouragement from her fond father, would steal close up to his side, and, leaning her glowing cheek against his shoulder, whisper out in tremulous accents, becoming more firm and articulate as she forgot *herself* in her subject, some little hymn of her own composing; sweet and pleasing, because hallowed by devotional feeling, and modulated by a musical ear. But such tempered en-

comium of Fanny's verses would have fallen far short of their deserts in Mark's opinion, who, but for fear of irreverence in the comparison, would have lauded her poetic genius above that of Sternhold and Hopkins.

Time and the march of intellect progressed, and little Fanny, now a tall slender girl of fourteen, had been long advanced to the dignity of class-teacher in the Sunday school, but her week-day schooling had been discontinued for the last year, partly because her parents thought there could be nothing left for her to learn, and partly because the mother could now ill spare the assistance of her helpful little maid; and the grandmother's increasing infirmities clung with a more endearing helplessness to her whom she delighted to call "the staff of her old age."

About this time a great change came to pass in the retired and hitherto quiet and unmodish parish of Holywell.

The old Squire—Holywell had its Squire *par excellence*—died, and was gathered to his fathers. The Dowager Squiress retired to her jointure-house at some distance, and the young Squire, with his fair, fashionable, noble, and talented wife (talented is the approved epithet, we believe), Mr. and the Lady Gertrude Lascelles, returned from a continental tour to take possession of the old manorial house of Lascelles Court and its noble domains —to *settle there*, in the modern sense of the phrase, which implies, being interpreted, to flutter down with a swarm of fashionable midges, at certain interregnums, between London and Brighton, and other modish watering-places; to exercise British hospitality and enjoy the country—which, according to the present approved reading, includes a round of Christmas festivities, of which batteaux, billiards, private theatricals, *tableaux vivants*, etc., enacted among the *élite*, and stared at by the natives, constitute the winter selection; and a fortnight's elegant retirement at Easter, with some half-score of exclusive *ennuyées*, the summer ruralities.

Mr. Lascelles and Lady Gertrude were, however, really amiable persons—*in their way*. Good-tempered and kind-hearted, as far as was compatible with the ever-encroaching worldliness which had crusted over the finer and nobler feelings of their nature. Charitable—*in their way*—when some work of charity, requiring no

sacrifice, presented itself. Neither insolent nor fastidious among their country neighbours; in fact, perhaps a thought too affable, approaching to the impertinence of condescension.

In short, they were, as they intended to be, popular characters (Mr. Lascelles was looking forward to the next general election), though the Lady Gertrude was literary as well as fashionable, and already stamped for immortality in the pages of sundry Annuals, Magazines, etc., etc., besides being the suspected authoress of one fashionable Novel, and the declared editress of another. Among other *rages*—(every pursuit was a *rage* with the Lady Gertrude)—she had a rage for patronising. No matter *who*—no matter *what*—no matter *where*—in town or country—from the prime lion of a London season to the small prodigy of an obscure village—from the affairs of Almack's to those of a rural parish, nothing came amiss to Lady Gertrude's all-embracing philanthropy, provided she might but overshadow the favoured object or individual with her *Ægide protectrice*. She patronised the farmers' wives, whose bee-hives and dairies were "so nice and interesting!" She patronised the labouring poor—only wishing she could persuade them "to give up those horrid pigs, and keep sheep instead, which would be so much more picturesque and profitable." She patronised the poultry-woman's gawky daughter, who reminded her of Madame de Maintenon, as she met her one day driving a flock of turkeys. She patronised the Miss Tomkinses and the Miss Simpkinses, who worshipped her as "the glass of fashion;" and the sentimental Mrs. Walsingham Potts, who was sure "dear Lady Gertrude's sensibility was too acute for her happiness." She patronised the Dorcas Society, and the Friendly Society, and the Branch Bible Society, and the parish school, and the handsome Vicar. Could it be supposed that our poor little Fanny, the rose of the village, and its acknowledged genius, should escape such liberal and discriminating patronage?"

On the very first Sunday that "the polish modern squire and his gay train" occupied "the squire's pew" in Holywell Church, Lady Gertrude's attention was arrested by the picturesque effect of a little family group of cottagers, who respectfully made way

for her to pass on, as she walked slowly, after divine service, through the churchyard to her carriage.

"What a lovely little creature that is leading the old blind woman!" she exclaimed, loud enough to crimson the downcast face of the youthful object of her admiration, as, looking back towards her she addressed herself to the gentleman on whose arm she leant, and who followed her into the carriage, while Mr. Lascelles joined the walking party.

"What a lovely little creature!—and what an interesting looking family—I must positively get acquainted with them."

A few days after, Lady Gertrude's pony-carriage, with its pair of beautiful white ponies, a groom attendant, and a fancifully-habited page, was seen at the low garden wicket of Mark Fairfield's humble abode, with the inmates of which (true to her professed purpose) her ladyship had already made herself acquainted, and was condescendingly seated, at the time being, beside the venerable grandmother, in a chair carefully dusted down by dame Fairfield's checked apron; while little Fanny stood before her, blushing and curtseying, as she half whispered her hesitating reply to questions rapidly put, and scarcely comprehended, though the great lady meant to be most perspicuous, as well as condescending: and though her smile was encouragement itself, yet did the little maiden's eyes fall bashfully before it under a sense of awkward shyness that had never oppressed her in the presence of Mrs. Clifford.

But then the Lady Gertrude was a stranger, besides being such a *very grand lady;* and, while she turned to talk with her grandmother, Fanny had time to recover herself, and steal a sidelong look at the beautiful face of the fair speaker; and then she listened to the silvery tones of a voice, so sweetly modulated, that it seemed to find its way to her heart, and charmed away so much of her timidity, that when the lady again addressed her, she was able to reply with modest readiness, and even to meet with a half-smiling upward look the steadfast gaze so smilingly bent upon her.

"And so, you really make verses, little damsel, as well as knit those nice warm stockings for your grandmother?"

Little Fanny's peach-coloured cheek flushed into rich crimson

and her fair eyelids fell as she tried to articulate the required answer. But the old blind woman, stretching forth her withered hand, drew the bashful child to her bosom, and, speaking for her, said:—"Yes, my lady! she has a pretty knack at poetry, as they call it, and sometimes it does me good to listen to one of my little Fanny's hymns of her own making; but I love still better to hear her read holy David's songs, and God's own blessed words, and teach her little brothers to read their book. And then, my lady, I tell her too she must not give her mind too much to useless vanities, but remember she is a poor man's child, and born to get her bread hardly, in a humble station." Oh wise and wholesome teaching!—Well for the little cottage maiden had she been left to that homely venerable teacher!

But it was ordered otherwise. From that day forth she was taken into especial favour by the Lady Gertrude, and her small services were put in frequent requisition at Lascelles Court in a variety of ways, infinitely more congenial to her taste, it must be owned, than the home drudgery which hitherto (undreaming of hardship in the task) she had performed with a willing mind and cheerful spirit, and still returned to without a murmur, though with a secretly growing repugnance, the cause of which was scarcely defined as yet in her young heart; and, while busy at the wash-tub, or mending the coarse family linen, or scouring the brick floor, she could not help often thinking, with a sigh, how much pleasanter it would be to be arranging the bouquets in Lady Gertrude's boudoir, or gathering roses for them in the beautiful flower-garden, or following her with a basket into the wild grounds in quest of field flowers, when the rural and scientific was her ladyship's prevailing mood; or assisting her to arrange the dried specimens in her herbal—(Jean Jacques! what was thine compared to that splendid depository?)—or inserting scraps and fragments, of all descriptions, graphic and literary, in one of those modern abominations, the dread of the lack-wits—the pride of the small wits—the loathed of the large wits—yclept an album.

Little Fanny, though generally beloved by her schoolmates, was less liked and sought for as a playfellow than other children of a more ordinary class. And after she left school and became

the protégée of the great lady of Lascelles Court, and was known to be admitted, not only to frequent attendance on herself, but on various occasions to the notice and favour of her brilliant circle, the affectionate familiarity with which she had been hitherto treated by her young companions gradually changed to a shade of shyness and reserve, which was not long (in some unamiable natures) in growing to a more unkindly feeling; and poor little Fanny, as guiltless of assumption and presumption, as before she had tasted the sweets of patronage, and been enlightened as to her pretensions as a genius, soon found herself, not only companionless, but unwelcome; not only unwelcome, but to some an object of spiteful and malicious mockery; and so often had she been driven to shrink away with a full heart and brimming eyes from unkindness, whose keenest taunt never provoked her to a sharp retort, that at length she ceased to intrude herself into the merry group where no hand was stretched out to meet hers with friendly greeting; and, except when sent on some errand by her mother, or on her way to the Great House, she seldom stirred beyond the wicket of her father's garden.

One friend, however, still remained to her, besides those of her own kindred—one faithful and true, whose generous nature was stimulated to a more affectionate kindliness for the unoffending favourite by the sort of outlawry to which she was so unjustly sentenced by the envy and jealousy of her former companions; and he stoutly maintained, that though to *his* mind "Fanny Fairfield might have been quite clever enough, and good enough, and just as happy may be, though my lady had not taken her into such grand favour, she was not a bit the prouder for it, nor the less sweet-tempered and willing to be every body's friend, if they would but be friends with her."

Frank Lovel, little Fanny's doughty champion, was nearly three years her senior; the son of a rich grazier, whose wife having survived the birth of her infant but a few weeks, the motherless little one was consigned, a sickly babe, to the tender nursing of Dame Fairfield, a lately-married servant of the Lovels, whose first child had died about the same time with her late mistress. To the maternal care of this good woman (under the blessing of Providence) little Frank was indebted for more than

the mere preservation of a frail and sickly life; for the strengthening of his constitution into a frame of such perfect health and hardihood, that, at five years old, there was not in the whole village so fine and promising a boy as the sturdy, sunburnt, curly-pated little fellow, who was still an inmate of Dame Fairfield's cottage, and proud, above all things, of the manly office intrusted to him, of leading about the "toddling wee thing" of two years old, whom he had learnt from her birth to call "*his little Fan.*" And he was to her as an elder brother, even after his father (with whom resided a maiden sister) had taken him back to his own home at The Grange. And there were few days in the week in the course of which Frank did not contrive to look in, for a few moments at least, at Dame Fairfield's cottage, or to meet Fanny on her way home from school, and entice her away with him to pick primroses in the lanes, or mushrooms in the dewy meadows, or berry-brown clusters of ripe nuts in the Grange copses. There was no love lost betwixt Frank and Fanny. The little girl had always loved him with an entire affection; and when, from her friend and playmate, he became her protector and champion—defending her with generous warmth against the unkindness and ill nature so innocently incurred, her young heart repaid him with an overflowing gratefulness; in proof of which she felt that she could make any sacrifice he might require of her, even to the renouncing of all those precious privileges to which she was admitted by favour of the Lady Gertrude.

"Indeed, indeed, dear Frank! I will give it all up, and go there no more, though my lady is so very good to me, and I see and hear such beautiful things, and learn so many. I will give it all up if it vexes you, and you would rather I staid at home entirely—only, you know, my lady is so good, too, to father and mother, and poor old grandmother—and father and mother like me to be at the great house, though granny shakes her head sometimes, and says her mind misgives her no good will come of it. But what harm *can* come of it, dear Frank? You know I shall never grow proud and foolish upon my lady's favour, or forget I am a poor cottage girl; and my lady says that if I am but guided by her—and—and 'cultivate the talents I have received from nature, under her direction'—those are my lady's

words—not mine, Frank!"—hesitated the blushing speaker, looking down with bashful consciousness—"she says, I may be able in time to provide for my dear parents in their old age, and keep them without work, like gentlefolks."

This long speech (the longest little Fanny had ever made) was uttered on one of those occasions when Frank, having waited about the lodge gates of Lascelles Court to escort her home, after a whole day spent at the great house, had felt his patience fairly exhausted by her long tarrying, and received her, when she appeared at last, with a vexed and reproachful expression in his clouded looks, and in the tone of the few abrupt words with which he returned her affectionate greeting. For, truth to tell, notwithstanding the generous warmth with which he took her part, whenever her favour at the great house was sneeringly or invidiously spoken of in his hearing, *he*, as well as "granny," had his misgivings on the subject—his doubts, not uninfluenced perhaps by a slight admixture of jealous feeling, whether it would not have been quite as well on the whole, for herself and others, if she had never been distinguished by the particular notice of my lady and the grand folks up at the Court. "For, after all, Fan," he had once or twice gone so far as to remark, on her launching out in some enthusiastic description of the elegances of Lascelles Court, and the wonders of refinement, taste, and fancy which had opened upon her, as it were, a new world, in that enchanted region—"After all, Fan, what is the good of it for the like of we? I know well enough that you're a deal cleverer than e'er another lass in the village, besides being twice as pretty and good-natured; and no wonder my lady and the gentlefolks should take to you, and set you up so mightily—not that you *are* much set up either—I'll always maintain *that*—but will they give you a fortune, Fan, to keep you without work like a lady—sitting all day in your silks and satins on your sofa, reading poetry books? And, Fan," he went on in a more subdued tone, and looking away from her as he spoke—"will any of them love you better than they that nursed you and dawdled about with you when you was a bit of a baby no bigger than Tib's kitten there? And all their fine ways won't make you merrier nor happier, I've a notion, than you used to be wh

you was *quite* my own little Fan, and liked nothing half so well as our holiday rambles after nuts or blackberries, or to sit with me making baskets by Rushbrook pool, repeating verses like a book: and you know, Fan, I always listened as long as you liked, and loved to hear you, for the matter of that, though I'm no great hand myself at such things."

It was in reply to some such ebullition of feeling on Frank's part that Fanny had spoken the "words of power" recorded in a preceding page—and if a soft answer turneth away wrath, still more easily did that gentle appeal allay the transient irritability, many degrees short of anger, that contracted his open brow and deepened the tone of his cheerful voice, as he walked by her side the first few yards of their way homeward. But these little scenes recurred oftener as Fanny's visits to the Court became more frequent; and, more than once, Frank's remonstrance had well nigh amounted to reproach, and Fanny's reply to a charge of injustice and unkindness; and they had parted, if not in anger, with wounded feelings on both sides; as yet however, without conscious diminution of affection in either.

Such had been the progress of affairs in the humble household of Mark Fairfield with little Fanny and her foster-brother—till the former, a fair sweet-looking girl, with the softest hazle eyes in the world—the reddest lips and sunniest smile, varying at times into a pensiveness of expression more intellectually beautiful—had attained her seventeenth year—and Frank, a fine-grown handsome youth as ever found favour in village maiden's eye, had completed his twentieth.

And Frank and Fanny, in spite of occasional differences, were still, though not declared lovers, tenderly attached to each other; and perhaps Frank would already have asked his father's consent (of which there was little doubt, for Farmer Lovel, though an opulent man, in his station, was not a proud one) to his union with Fanny Fairfield, but for certain half-defined feelings of jealous doubt and painful self-depreciation, which, working together in his mind during their too frequent and prolonged separation, sometimes led him to question the possibility of Fanny's perfect attachment to one so deficient as himself in all the graces and acquirements she had learnt to prize so highly, and in which

she herself had made so great proficiency under the patronage of the Lady Gertrude.

Yes; Frank felt, even more than Fanny, that an intervening something, untangible, undefinable, but still a barrier, had been growing up between them; and there were moments when Fanny's heart reproached her with temporary forgetfulness of Frank—or, worse still, when her thoughts recurred to him in the midst of the brilliant circle of Lascelles Court, in the form of unfavourably comparison.

"But what does it matter, after all?" was the mental conclusion with which she now impatiently repressed the invidious suggestions, "Frank is handsomer than any of them—dear Frank! —and would look as well as the best, if he was dressed as fashionably; and I am sure, if he had had as much learning, he would be *quite* as clever."

In the meantime the *habitués* of Lascelles Court found their account, or their pastime, in distinguishing Lady Gertrude's protégée with pernicious notice—alas! not always by merely injudicious kindness, or for the sake of the Lady Gertrude. The youthful prettiness of the little cottager had blossomed into loveliness of no common order, and the flattering speeches whispered in her ear by many a male lounger of the boudoir were not always a tribute to her genius, nor uttered in mere unmeaning compliment, nor from the purely contemptible motive of paying court through her to her patroness. And who can wonder that those whispers—of little meaning, but mischievous tendency—were listened to by the simple maiden with a thrilling consciousness, at least as pleasurable as embarrassing? And who can marvel, that, as her ear and mind became more and more habituated to the sweetness of those glozing whispers, more and more attuned to the language of educated refinement, she learnt to crave for the accustomed incense, and to shrink disgusted from the vulgar coarseness of those in her own station—to wish even that "dear Frank was a *little* more genteel"—and "skilled in the language of compliment," she would have added, if she had perfectly understood and candidly expressed her secret feelings? It was too true: Fanny Fairfield was no longer Frank Lovel's little Fan; nor the Fanny whose sweet voice and sweeter

smile made sunshine in her father's cottage—who laid down to sleep at night after a day of cheerful industry, varied by snatches of simple but heartfelt enjoyment, with words of thanksgiving for the goodness of Providence yet breathing on her lips—and who awaked with the dawn from her untroubled slumbers with the same thankful heart, in the same cheerful spirit, prepared for all the duties of the day, happy in the returning light, glad with the gladness of the lark, and disposed to impart to every one of the overflowing contentedness of her own spirit. Alas! that "the stranger," the selfishly unreflecting, the rashly speculative, should dare to "intermeddle with such joy"—should dare to interfere with and alter the course of the living stream, without calculating, not only the cost and labour, but the danger of the experiment! The chances that diverted from their natural channel the limpid waters may become turbid and impure, or run to waste in stony places, or sink engulfed in quicksands, instead of flowing on in humble usefulness, through green places and quiet ways, to their final destination.

In the earlier stage of her favour at Lascelles Court, Fanny had professed her willingness to relinquish all the pleasures and privileges it conferred, if assured they were the cause of uneasiness to Frank; and well would it have been for both if he had taken her at her word, honestly acknowledging and explaining to her the strength and reasonableness of his objections. But touched with the generosity of the offer, and half ashamed of his own jealous petulance, and comparative selfishness, he scorned to indulge the latter by taking advantage of her yielding nature, and for a time half schooled himself into the belief that his fears were groundless, and his disturbance unreasonable. But again and again similar scenes recurred, till at length Fanny grew cautious of pouring out all her thoughts and feelings, as she had been wont to do, to her no longer sympathising friend; and Frank, soon becoming conscious of the withdrawing of her confidence, attributed the change to motives less innocent than the actual ones; and, stung to the heart by a growing suspicion that she he loved looked down upon him, drew back in his turn, with a proud humility, disdaining complaint or attempt at explanation, from which he shrank, it is possible, as much in apprehension of

the confirmations of his worst fears, as from less tender and more selfish feelings. Still, for a length of time, he continued to watch and wait for her coming, as in happier days; lingering in the twilight about the lodge gates to accompany her on her homeward way after she had passed that barrier, beyond which not all the yearning fondness with which his heart still overflowed for her would have induced him to advance a step into the sylvan paradise, which, if poor Frank could have expressed himself classically, he would have anathemised as a region of Circean spells. And at last he ceased to intrude upon her, even at that hour when he had been fain to fancy her all his own again, while he could cling to the illusion. She came—*not unaccompanied.* The tones of that dear familiar voice, borne on the stillness of the evening air, reached him before he could distinguish her form in the depth of the dark avenue. Other accents of manly intonation mingled with those to which his heart, as he listened, thrilled through every pulse with a new sense of bitterness. Stepping back a few paces from the gate against which he had been leaning, he strained his eyes through the twilight to discern the advancing forms. *Hers* could not be mistaken. His own Fanny, leaning familiarly (as he fancied) on the arm of a gentleman, who was stooping towards her as they walked in earnest conversation. He could not divine; his feelings were too much excited to suppose the possibility that she had rather declined than encouraged the objectionable companionship; and that her hand rested *not* willingly on the arm, through which it had been drawn *not* unresistingly. He saw, he felt only the fact as it appeared. One more look to be assured that it was so. His own Fanny thus familiarly linked with another, one whose superior station alone should have been her warning and defence. And for himself! had he deserved this of her? One look, more in sorrow than in anger—(ah, Fanny! could you have caught its unutterable expression)—and slowly and silently he turned from the old trysting-place, and from the path that led towards *her* home, and looked up no more till he stood before the old porch of the Grange; gazing for a moment before he entered at the venerable home of his father and forefathers with feelings of unwonted bitterness. The substantial old farm-house, with its

double gables and chimney stacks of ancient masonry; its deep-set lattices and time-stained walls, half hidden by mantling ivy, stood dark and undefined in the deepening twilight—except when the ruddy glow of fire and candle-light, streaming through a lower window, lit up its heavy frame-work, and the glossy leaves of an embowering bay-tree, and the grass-plot beneath, and the whole side of the jasmine-covered porch. Frank's gaze, as it wandered over the peaceful dwelling, rested a moment on that illumined window and the scene within. There, by the wide hospitable hearth, where the cheerful wood fire was heaped so unsparingly, sat his venerable grey-haired father, shading his eyes with his uplifted hand as he bent over

"The big Ha' Bible, ance his father's pride."

And there, just opposite to her brother, on whom his eyes were fixed with reverential earnestness, sat Aunt Amy, with her placid face and ever busy fingers, in which the bright knitting-needles glanced and sparkled as she plied them with lightning quickness. And there stood the round oak table, covered with a snow-white cloth and half spread for supper by a "neat-handed Phillis," whose mild soft eyes turned ever and anon with a look of loving reverence towards the venerable pair, as she moved to and fro with quiet *handiness* in her "service of love." No mercenary handmaid was she; the grateful orphan niece! the homely-featured but sweet-tempered Mary Lovel, whose service was the heart's payment for benefits otherwise unpayable. "Oh that Fanny were like *her*! No wiser, nor no prettier; then how happy we might have been together!" was the half-uttered aspiration of the watcher without, as he followed with his eyes the housewifery preparations of "Cousin Mary." "How father and aunt and Mary would have loved her like a child and a sister! But that's all over now." And with the deepest sigh his young heart had ever heaved, Frank turned into the dark shadow of the porch, and in another moment made one of the family group at that homely supper table.

Still, when the extensive business of the large grazing farm took him farther afield to various market towns, and from time to time even to the great city, he never failed to bring back, as

in past days, some little offering, suited to the taste of the ungrateful one, with a delicacy of choice scarcely to be expected from one to whom some scented coxcomb of the privileged class would have deemed it the height of absurdity to apply any epithet more honourable than that of "clodpole," comfortably unconscious of the glorious truth, that

> "Worth makes the man, the want of it the fellow—
> The rest is nought but leather and prunella."

On one of his latest returns, after the absence of a week spent in the great city (during which interval he had chewed "the cud of many bitter fancies"), his handsome and expressive face brightened over with irrepressible gladness, as on entering the little gate of Mark Fairfield's garden, the first object that met his eyes was her on whom his thoughts had dwelt so uneasily of late, seated quietly at work in the old yew-tree porch, looking (his heart whispered) more like his "own little Fan" than he had seen her look for many a long day. And when, at the unexpected sound of his voice, *her* face, too, beamed brightly with a glow of pleasure not to be mistaken, and starting up, she ran to meet him, with the joyful exclamation of "Dear Frank!" his manly nature was for a moment subdued to a degree of weakness that did it no discredit, and looking at her (as he held her from him) through the glistening moisture that had gathered in his eyes, he said, in a voice far different from its firm natural tone—"Then you *are* glad to see me, Fanny?"

Those were happy moments! full of an inexpressible sweetness. With scarcely a word spoken, those two young hearts in an instant understood each other, and oh! the incoherent outpouring of confession and sorrow, and assurances and forgivenesses, that were interchanged in the uncounted moments that followed. "And now, Fan!" said her lover (the old fond diminutive resumed with the old fond familiar feeling), "And now, Fan! I have brought you here a little present that I am almost sure you will like; for it is just in your own way," and he produced a neatly-bound volume of Bloomfield's "Farmer's Boy." "And do you know," he continued, when the well-chosen gift had been accepted and admired in a way that repaid him for past

months of misery, "I don't know but what I shall turn poet myself in time, I'm so taken with that story;—that's *no story* either, but only truth and nature, and that's the reason it pleases me so well, I've a notion." Frank spoke unconscious of the self-eulogium, but Fanny's heart, with the quickness of female sensibility, caught the full inference of those careless words, and warmed towards the speaker with a glow of affectionate respect for his noble simplicity of mind and purity of feeling.

A short spell of sunshine, a halcyon calm, succeeded this unpremeditated explanation:—and all was love and confidence on one side, and grateful affection and unreserve on the other. And though Frank, in his revived security (born of happiness), asked nothing—required nothing more than this, Fanny, anticipating his wishes for the future, laid down for herself a system of the most unexceptionable prudence, against the return of the family to Lascelles Court should again place her in circumstances that might cause him uneasiness. And now, casting away all doubts and misgivings, in the fulness of re-established confidence, Frank applied to his indulgent father for the consent he felt so sure of, that it was a painful surprise to him, when the old man, contracting his brow, with a severity of expression little characteristic of his natural aspect, said, "Dost thee know what thee art about, boy? Dost thee know what thee wouldst have? Wouldst have a fine madam for thy wife, that would be afraid of soiling her slippers if she did but step across the yard to serve the poultry; and would sit all day at her nonsense books and her fillagree work, instead of minding the house and all the concerns, as thy poor mother minded 'em, Frank? (a good wife she was to me, God bless her!)—and would turn up her nose at thy poor father and aunt, and all the old-fashioned ways of the Grange, because we haven't learnt to ape our betters, forsooth, and live above our stations? No, no, Frank! Let them keep her that's spoilt her, I say. And a mortal pity it is they *have* spoilt her; for there warn't a lass in the parish I could have fancied better for thy wife and to sit in thy poor mother's place, Frank, than Mark Fairfield's daughter, tho' thee'd'st take her without a penny in her placket, or a smock to her back. But it's no good talking

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now. Let them keep her that's spoilt her. She won't do for the Grange."

But Frank pleaded his cause, or rather that of the offending Fanny, so earnestly and so well, and aunt Amy (the most doting of aunts—the most tender-hearted and compassionate of ancient spinsters) seconded his pleading so ably, pledging herself so generously for the housewifery capabilities and teachable disposition of her favourite Fanny, that, little by little, the artificial frost-work of the farmer's heart was melted, and at last he yielded to the combined attack —though with a boding shake of the head, and on conditions that the proposed union should be deferred for a full twelvemonth, till time should prove—was the old man's not unreasonable stipulation—"whether Fan was quite come to her senses again, and like to keep 'em."

And Fanny, with whom, "nothing loath," her lover now sealed this long understood engagement, passed many days at the Grange, and soon "won golden opinions," not less by the sweetness of her endearing manners and respectful attentions to the venerable couple, than by her teachable readiness and real helpfulness in all household matters. And, on the last morning of her latest visit, as the farmer spread his brown bread at breakfast with butter of Fanny's making (cousin Mary could have made no better, herself was the first to own), he looked at his son with a nod and smile of most satisfactory significance, and, pinching the blushing cheek of his future daughter-in-law as she sat beside him, said, "She'll do yet, Frank—they haa'nt quite spoilt her."

"The course of true love never did run smooth;" and that of our village lovers was soon troubled by the return of the family, followed by an unusual train of guests, to Lascelles Court, and Fanny was again drawn into the "charmed circle"—drawn thither, indeed, under her present circumstances, and with her present feelings, more from a sense of grateful duty to her patroness than in compliance with her own inclinations. Lady Gertrude, who had been for some time indisposed, was now wholly confined to the house, and laid claim to Fanny's almost constant attendance; and Frank—too generous, too confiding Frank—was not the man to exact from her he loved, and now entirely trusted, an ungrateful return for the favours of her benefactress.

Frank was called to a different part of the country. He had been six weeks absent. Six weeks of tedious endurance they had proved to him—To Fanny!—could some warning voice have foretold to her how she would spend the interval, she would have turned from the augury indignantly or in scorn. But the net was spread and the silly bird entangled, unconscious even of danger. Before Frank's departure, she had begun sitting for her portrait to Mr. Delisle, a young artist patronized by Lady Gertrude, and, as only a few of the most favoured guests (Lord Henry Feltham of course included) were admitted to the studio, time and opportunity were in abundance at his command, for the advancement of a speculation, which had been suggested to his enterprising spirit by a communication of Lady Gertrude's, of the brilliant advantages to be anticipated from her continued patronage.

Now Mr. Delisle was not only attracted by Fanny's beauty, but, with the quick, and excursive, and comprehensive eye of genius, took in at a glance the whole range of contingences which might combine to make that beauty a profitable as well as pleasing acquisition to a "rising artist." The speculation was decidedly a good one, and Mr. Delisle was decided. From the foregoing summary, it might be natural to infer that the gentleman in question was one of little or no principle. But that inference would be equally erroneous and unjust: Mr. Delisle *had* principles the most decided and characteristic; and those the very worst that can be conceived to govern the heart and mind, from which the fear of God and the moral sense of vice and virtue had been long ago cast out as burthensome and inconvenient. His personal appearance, with all its pictorial accessaries of costume and attitude, was strikingly Byronian. Can we say more in its favour? He accompanied "poetic pearls" of his own stringing, with melodies of his own composing on the Spanish guitar, successfully enough to witch unscientific ears, and exhibit himself under the most picturesque of all possible circumstances. His language was poetry!—His voice music!—His name romantic!—Algernon Delisle! Somebody told an absurd story of having seen a certificate signed by him with the less euphonious compound—Anthony Styles—but that malicious calumny only

afforded him an occasion of embodying the "beautiful scorn" of the Byronian smile, in which he was eminently successful.

But for the preservative circumstances of her situation, engaged affections, and plighted troth, it is probable that Fanny's heart, ever too apt to follow the lead of wild fire imagination and romantic fancy, would have yielded itself an easy conquest to the first advances of one who united in himself so many and varied powers of captivation:—and as it was, secure in the consciousness of her engagement, she felt gratitude proportioned to her admiration, for the passionate adoration professed for her by one so much her superior, that his liberal offer of heart, hand, and fortunes, was, in her modest self-estimation, no less a sacrifice, than "All for love, and the world well lost." She *was grateful* accordingly—and grieved—and flattered—and excited—and altogether more engrossed by Mr. Delisle and his unfortunate passion than might have been quite agreeable to Frank, had these proceedings been known to him. But with her own conscience she was perfectly at peace. She had modestly but decidedly declined Mr. Delisle's proposals, even intimating to him, though in no very precise terms, the circumstance of her pre-engagement. What more could be required of her? He was devoted and despairing—she compassionate, but inflexible—Lady Gertrude displeased and disconcerted, for Delisle had providently secured her interest and approbation before he declared himself to Fanny; and the latter, when remonstrated with by her ladyship on her capricious folly in rejecting proposals so every way advantageous, murmured out some confused and unsatisfactory excuse, but shrank, with inexcusable weakness—and from motives that would ill have borne analysis—from explaining all by a frank statement of her long-plighted engagement. But for this disingenuous timidity, it is but justice to suppose that the Lady Gertrude would not have continued to favour the views of Delisle, which, as it was, she took every opportunity of furthering; and no possible circumstances could have fallen in with those views more felicitously than the long and frequently private interviews afforded by Fanny's sittings for her portrait. Lady Gertrude whispered to a few of the friends most in her confidence something of her plans for the establishment of her young favourite.

significant smiles and hints were condescendingly bestowed on the pretty Fanny; who was too simple—too timid and abashed—to undeceive the smilers; but she was more than abashed—frightened and conscience-stricken—when Lord Henry Feltham, who assisted now and then with discreet tact at intervals of the long morning sittings, whispered something of his intention to sit for his own portrait to Delisle, when "the fortunate fellow should have secured permanent possession of his present lovely model." The bold freedom of his lordship's speech, and the look with which it was accompanied, startled her into sudden and painful consciousness. Did it rouse her to immediate action? To stop—to turn—to fly—while it was yet time? That moment was the crisis of her fate, and at such moments no human being is forsaken by his good angel or by the indwelling monitor of his own heart, while he yet lingers and listens to the commissioned prompter, and to "the still small voice." Did Fanny pause, and listen, and obey? Fly from the Tempter, or defy him, trusting in her own strength? Alas! alas!

A late September evening had shut in dark and dreary as the coach in which Frank had taken his place wound down the last hill in its approach to Holywell, through which lay its route to the next post town. Light after light sparkled out from the low dwellings of the straggling street, and from those more irregularly scattered among the gardens and orchards of the sloping upland beyond. But Frank's eye glanced over all to one familiar spot, when, from the lattice of a poor cottage rather apart from the rest, beamed a few small rays that had been to him as an evening star, from boyhood to that hour, and now sent a thrill of gladness through his heart, as he first descried the well-known beacon twinkling through the thin autumnal foliage of an intervening pear-tree. * * * * *

By that hour, on the evening of the ensuing day, Frank Lovel, having made some hasty arrangements with his father, was already many miles on his way back to the place he had left so lately, little anticipating that he should revisit it so soon, and for no limited period.

And we, too, reader, will take our leave of Holywell and its inhabitants for a three years' interval, during which, time,

chance, and change have wrought, unceasingly, the fated work, whose consummation and their end must be coeval. Lascelles Court is again deserted. Its noble owners are voyaging toward the "land of the Orange and Myrtle," Mr. Lascelles having been thrown out at the last election, and Philhellenism being the latest and most enthusiastically assumed of Lady Gertrude's moral phases.

There is light on the hearths and smoke from the chimneys of the Grange and of Mark Fairfield's cottage; and all looks as it was wont about both habitations. But there is change within. The old farmer's seat is vacant, and "his place on earth knoweth him no more;" and no living soul of the name of Fairfield now dwells beneath their cottage thatch, nor in the village or neighbourhood, where, from father to son, for many generations, they had earned their bread honestly by the sweat of their brow—and lived and died "in good repute with all men." What! all gone in so short space?—youth and age—parent and child—so soon gathered together in that last resting-place, where

"The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep?"

Nay, but one heap—one grassy mound has been added to the nameless graves of the Fairfields since we visited that churchyard. There, on that headstone fronting them, beneath the obituary of his long-deceased partner, is engraved the honoured name of Matthew Lovel. But where are they—the husband and wife, still hale and vigorous in autumnal strength? Those hopeful comely boys, fast springing into manhood? and that fair girl, the flower of the flock?—Alas! for her sake, parents and brothers are wanderers (self-exiled) in a far land beyond the seas, where no tongue may inflict shame and anguish by pronouncing the name they once loved so dearly. Fanny Fairfield is a wife:—But not the wife of Frank Lovell. A wife:—not honoured and honourable, but sinned against and sinning.—Miserable! fallen! degraded! lost.——Ah! *not* lost for ever.

We will not follow her through the sickening detail of circumstances that led to her union with Delisle, at no long period after the death of her grandmother, and her abrupt parting with Frank; suffice it, that in an evil hour, overborne and overpo

suaded, infatuated, and fatally deceived, as much respecting the true state of her own feelings as the character of her new admirer, she became the wife of Delisle, and removed with him to London. For a time her parents continued to receive from her occasional letters, now and then accompanied by such tokens of her loving remembrance, in the shape of small presents, as "it was in her power," she intimated, to send them. But of her husband, and of his circumstances, even from the first, she made brief and infrequent mention, and at last even those slight notices were discontinued, and her letters contained little else but assurances, more and more tender and affecting, of the love she bore to her dear parents, and brothers, "and every body—every thing about dear, dear Holywell!" So concluded, for the most part, the few letters received by the Fairfields from their daughter in the second year of her ill-omened marriage; and so ended the very last that ever reached them (toward the close of that year), with the addition of a few words obliterated by the pen, not so completely but that the keen eye of anxious affection made them out to be—"Oh! that I had never left it." Once or twice Dame Fairfield had "made bold" to apply to "my lady" during her now "few and far between" visits to the Court, for intelligence of her child; but, except on the first occasion, a few months after Fanny's marriage, her ladyship returned no satisfactory answer to the poor mother's humbly anxious enquiries; and at last intimated to her, though not with unfeeling carelessness of inflicting pain, that she was not now, nor had been for some time past, in habits of communication with her former favourite, "whose misconduct," she grieved to say it, "had made it quite impossible that she should continue to notice her." She did not add—she did not acknowledge to herself, that soon after Fanny's marriage other objects had begun to engross her thoughts and monopolize her interest; nor was she sensible (to do her justice) that this capricious transfer of her favour, by disappointing the expectations of the unprincipled Delisle, had subjected his unoffending wife to the most brutal treatment, and mainly contributed to throw her into the arms of the destroyer, in the desperation of outraged feelings, and under that cruel sense of abandonment so peculi-

arly open to the soothing influence of sincere or insidious sympathy.

Frank Lovel never spoke of Fanny; nor was her name ever breathed in his hearing by Aunt Amy or Mary, though it still lived in their pure and womanly hearts, and was often recalled, with tenderly compassionate mention, in their quiet communings with each other.

Frank made no alteration in the family arrangements when the death of his father left him sole master of the Grange. Aunt Amy continued to preside over the peaceful household, and though Mary, when the funeral was over, intimated her sense of the unfitness that she should live on a burden on her cousin, and her intention of seeking some decent service, there needed no vehement urging to dissuade her from her purpose.

"Dear Mary! don't leave us," said Frank. "We should miss you more than ever now father is gone. For his sake, stay with us, Cousin Mary!" And those few simple words of entreaty, and the look of brotherly love and kind pressure of the hand that enforced them, fixed Mary's fate at the Grange for as long as her continuance there should be so cordially and affectionately desired. And time made no change in her cousin's disposition towards her, except, perhaps, to make him more and more sensible how necessary to his comfort she had become; how painful it would be to part with one whose unobtrusive sympathy with his "silent sorrow," and womanly tenderness of pity towards its erring and unhappy causer, endeared her to him even more than the bond of kindred and life-long experience of her worth and her affection.

An accidental circumstance suddenly gave a tongue and language to these suppressed feelings; and thereafter Frank found comfort and relief in unreserved communication with the gentle-hearted and right-minded Mary. He sat reading one day by the winter hearth, in his father's accustomed seat, at the back of which stood a high folding screen, placed there to intercept the draughts from the many doors opening into the spacious old-fashioned room. Behind the screen, unobservant whom it sheltered, entered through a back passage from the dairy, Mary and a young woman of the village, with a replenished butter-basket,

The conversation they were continuing would have passed unheeded by Frank, had not his attention been suddenly arrested by the sound of a too-familiar name, coupled, by the flippant utterer, with an opprobrious epithet that sent the warm blood mantling over cheek and brow of the unconscious listener, who, all unseen as he was, shrunk back into himself, and buried his face in his hands as if to hide the agony of that reflected shame. But very soon the bitterness of that sudden passion gave way to better and softer feelings; to the soothing sweetness of another voice, pleading, like Pity's self, for merciful judgment and Christian charity.

"Oh Susan! Susan! do not judge her so harshly," urged the tender-hearted Mary Lovel.—"We do not know all—we cannot tell how she was tempted; nor how the angels in Heaven—God's holy angels! may even yet rejoice over her, a repentant sinner."

That mild rebuke made little impression on the unfeeling girl to whom it was spoken, who replied only by a scornful laugh as she hastened off with her market-basket. But it sank into the very heart of that other unsuspected hearer; and as Mary started back, frightened and confused at discovering him in his lurking place, he rose up, and, gently detaining her, printed a brother's kiss upon her brow, and said, in a low voice and with glistening eyes:—

"God bless you for those sweet words, Cousin Mary! and—I bless you."

Was Mary doubly blessed?

Toward the end of the winter, the earlier part of which had been marked by this little occurrence, the affairs of his large grazing concern made it necessary for Frank to pay one of those visits to the capital, from which he now shrank with painful reluctance, and shortened to the utmost—never, during his compelled sojourn in the City, venturing to the theatres, or any place of public resort, or even beyond the beat of his commercial dealings, in the sickening dread of some encounter that might carry to his heart conviction even more appalling than its present certainty of the lost state of one so dear to him in her days of innocence.

On this particular occasion he had hurried over his business with a most unbusiness-like impatience, and by so doing brought it so near to a conclusion, that on the next day but one he hoped to be on his road homeward. But besides the remainder of his worldly transactions, he had yet an errand of mercy to perform before his departure; to visit, for the last time, a poor wretch under sentence of transportation in the gaol of Newgate. More than once during his present sojourn in the City, he had sought the cell of the condemned, once an honest countryman of his native village, and now, he trusted, sincerely penitent, though a convicted felon. Frank had promised the unhappy man to see him once again before he left London, and in fulfilment of that promise he bent his steps towards the prison. In the course of his former visits he had formed some acquaintance with one of the principal turnkeys, of whose humane character the prisoner had spoken with grateful feeling, and Frank was indebted to him for much personal civility and interesting information respecting the interior arrangements of the gaol, as well as for many curious details and anecdotes of its ever-shifting population.

Among its present inmates, Evans had alluded in particular to an unhappy man awaiting his trial for forgery, but not likely to live till the assize.

"He is dying, sir—dying in that cell"—said the turnkey, pointing to a door they were passing at the moment—"and, used as I am to things of this nature, my blood runs cold when I hear the language of that God-forsaken man. None but a wretch God-forsaken could outrage as he does a poor heartbroken creature, his miserable wife, the only living thing that cleaves to him in his disgrace and wretchedness. Hark!" he hastily interrupted, laying his hand on Frank's arm as they stopped a moment near the door in question. "Hark, sir!—you may hear her sobs and his vile curses—and that!—the scoundrel! that was a dastard blow.—Wait a moment, sir, while I step in and interfere, or the villain will murder her." And, taking a key from the bunch he carried, the kind-hearted man hastily unlocked the door and entered to interpose his merciful authority. From the passage where he awaited his guide, Frank could see the interior of the cell and the figure of its wretched inmate, tall and gaunt as a

skeleton, seated on his pallet bed, beside which knelt a woman, whose face was hidden on the coverlet, while deep sobs burst from a bosom, the heavings of which seemed to convulse every nerve of her slight attenuated frame. Her arms were flung forward on the bed, the long, thin, sickly-looking hands clapsed together, and a mass of soft brown hair, burnished with paly gold, from which a ruffian hand had torn off the covering, fell over and about the unhappy creature and almost to the ground (as she knelt) in rich luxuriance, the more striking from the contrasting wretchedness of her general appearance, and of the old black cloak in which her figure was enveloped. Frank's heart thrilled within him at sight of those bright tresses; for they brought to his remembrance one whose fate might be as wretched as that of the unfortunate he now compassionated. But the tender emotion quickly changed to indignant feeling, as, scowling savagely at the prostrate creature, her brutal husband flung from him one of those scattered tresses that had fallen on his knee, exclaiming, with a coarse and horrid imprecation:—

"Sell these—these would fetch something; — more than they are worth—more than these noble earnings of your '*honest industry*,' as you call them." And he dashed down on the floor a few shillings from his clenched fist. "*Your virtuous* earnings, forsooth! Where was your virtue when you took yourself off with that paltry scoundrel of a lord—because you could not bear to live a life of 'guilty deception' truly!—You might have lived what life you pleased, so it had been profitable to me—what else did I marry you for? And what care I for your repentance, as you call it? And if you chose to find me out in this cursed place (where I should not have been but for you), what good do you me with your whimpering and these paltry alms?—You might help me *now*, if you would"—muttered the wretch, after a moment's pause, dropping his voice and turning away his face as he spoke; but Evans, unable longer to restrain his honest indignation, roughly silenced him, and, picking up the unhappy woman's bonnet from the floor where it lay trampled underfoot by her vile partner, he gently raised her from her kneeling posture, and, wrapping round her the old rusty black silk cloak, that had half fallen from her shoulders, soothed and encouraged her in a

voice of kindly feeling, as he assisted her trembling hands to find the comb that had fastened up her dishevelled hair, and to gather it up, under the bonnet, which she dragged down over her face, and tied, or rather knotted together, with fingers almost unequal to the task. And yet, again, as her humane conductor led her out, she turned towards her tyrant, and would have spoken; but, before she could articulate a word, his fury burst forth in a fresh torrent of blasphemous imprecation, and Evans, hurrying her from the cell, hastily secured it, while the poor creature cowered shuddering within herself, her head drooping low upon her bosom; and accompanying her to the entrance-door of the farther passage, fastened it after he had seen her safely through, with an injunction to stop and "have something" to recover her in his good woman's room as she passed it, and returned to Frank, full of apologies (little required by him to whom they were offered) for having detained him so long an involuntary witness to a scene so revolting.

"But, indeed, sir!" continued the turnkey, "my heart bleeds for that poor creature; an erring one she has been, I believe; but a true penitent she is, if ever there was one, since she who kneeled and kissed the Saviour's feet. It would go to your heart to hear her begging forgiveness of that wretch, and receiving back curses from his brutal lips, because he cannot drive her to sinful courses to supply his selfish cravings. She works day and night at her needle, and all her poor earnings she brings him, as you saw—keeping scarce enough to save her from starving; for she is wasted to a skeleton by want as well as sickness; and when my good woman has given her a morsel in our little room, in her way out of the gaol, she has eaten with a famished eagerness that showed how she had pinched herself of every thing. But it cannot last long; the doctor says her husband is in the last stage of a consumption, and in a few days he will be moved into the infirmary, where it will not be in his power to abuse her, as he does in that solitary cell."

Frank felt too deeply interested by what he had heard and witnessed that day not to enquire for the unfortunate woman on his subsequent visits to the prison. But on this last occasion his enquiries were forestalled by the appearance of the desolate crea-

ture herself, turning from the gaol, as he approached it, with slow and feeble steps; her head bowed down upon her bosom, and the old straw bonnet dragged so far over her face as to conceal it entirely from Frank's compassionately earnest gaze, though she passed him so close that his ear distinguished a gasping sob. "It is all over, sir!" said Evans, who stood looking after the unhappy woman. That man is gone to his account—that miserable man! Would you believe it, sir, almost his last act was an attempt to strike her, after his speech failed, and he could curse no longer, as she knelt by his bed with uplifted hands—praying for one word—one sign of pardon. She is gone away broken-hearted to her poor comfortless hole of a room, but my good woman won't forget her, I reckon, no more than myself; and her time in this world won't be long, poor soul! That hollow cough ofhers and the red spot upon her cheek are death-tokens, I doubt." After a few more words relating to the unfortunate creature, for whom his compassion had been so strongly excited, Frank placed a trifle for her use in the hands of the humane turnkey, and passed on to the more immediate object of his visit. *That* concluded—his last farewell spoken to the departing exile—the last prayer said with him—the last messages received, as sacred trusts, for his afflicted relatives, Frank Lovell turned away from those gloomy walls in silent and sad abstraction, and proceeded to execute what yet remained unconcluded of his business in the City.

The short winter day was drawing to a close, when, after a weary round, he bent his steps over London Bridge towards the temporary home he hoped so soon to quit, for that with which all thoughts of comfort, peace, and social enjoyment were connected in his bosom. The anticipation quickened his pace, weary as he was, and he had nearly crossed the bridge when his attention was suddenly arrested by the appearance of a female leaning, in a half-sitting attitude, against the parapet of one of the side niches. Her figure was huddled up and closely shrouded in an old black cloak, the large hood of which was drawn over her bonnet, as, with head declined upon her bosom, she sat immovable as stone. Frank stopped and gazed. He *could not* be mistaken. The bowed form—the dress *so similar*—and *that* rent in

the old cloak. It *was* assuredly the same unhappy creature for whom so much compassionate interest had recently been awakened in his heart. And what could be her business, her purpose, at such a place, at such an hour? Frank shuddered as the question suggested itself, and instinctively he drew nearer to the miserable object of his humane solicitude.

But she remained perfectly unobservant of his approach; and he stopped again, silently gazing on her still motionless form. After a few moments a deep sigh, almost a groan, burst from her bosom; and, stretching out her clasped hands, upraised as if in prayer, she rose, and, turning toward the water, dragged herself upon the wall against which she had been leaning. Frank stepped close to her, still unnoticed. Her senses were closed to all outward sight and sound, as she knelt now on the extreme edge of the parapet, looking down into the dark water beneath. A moment yet, she crouched immovable, in the intensity of that downward gaze. The next, flinging her arms abroad with frantic gesture, a thrilling cry, "Lord have mercy!" broke from her lips, and she would have plunged headlong but for *that* hand (the instrument of Providence), whose restraining grasp had been upon her garments from the moment of her taking this fearfully suspicious station. She had prayed for mercy in the agony of her despair, and the prayer was heard and granted in the frustration of her guilty purpose. She was saved;—saved from death eternal; but, as it seemed, her days on earth were numbered and cut off, even in the act of interposing mercy. As Frank lifted her unresisting from the wall, her head dropped heavily aside in total insensibility, and a dark stream trickled on the shoulder of her light-coloured dress, from which the cloak had partly fallen. The wintry twilight was darkening into night, so that he could but just discern that fatal token—but he *felt* it also—a few drops warm upon his hand, and a sick shudder came over him, for he knew that it was blood, and that it was oozing from the lips of his now senseless burden. He carried her a few paces, with yet uncertain purpose, and now eagerly accepted the proffered services of a few persons who had gathered about the spot, to call a coach from the nearest stand. By the time it drew up he had regained composure, and decided what to do. He knew not the

place of abode of the unhappy woman, but remembered that Evans had alluded to it as wretched and comfortless, and among strangers. Directing the coachman to Newgate Street, he ordered him to stop within a short distance of the prison, at a little shop, the proprietors of which, an old widow and her widowed daughter, were known to him as kind-hearted and respectable, though poor and humble, and he remembered to have seen a bill of lodgings in their window.

Sustaining the helpless creature as she lay back, still senseless, in a corner of the coach, he would have removed the bonnet to give her more air, but that her head pressed it heavily against the side of the coach, and, fearing by the slightest motion to re-excite the hemorrhage, which had apparently ceased, he contented himself with loosening the strings and with guarding her as much as possible from any sudden or jolting motion. He pressed his fingers to the wrist of the thin cold hand that lay lifeless on her lap. The pulse beat feebly, scarce perceptibly; but it *did* beat, and as he ascertained the fact, his feelings gave utterance to a devoutly breathed "Thank God!"

It seemed as if that fervent ejaculation had roused and recalled the flitting spirit. A slight but universal tremor agitated the wasted frame. Twice—thrice, she drew a long deep inspiration, and when Frank, observing these indications of returning consciousness, bent over the desolate creature, and spoke soothingly in a voice of compassionate gentleness, she gave a shuddering start, and, half lifting her head, essayed to speak. But the effort was too much for her feeble powers. She relapsed into her swoon; and Frank perceived, by the flashing lamp light, that large drops of blood were again falling from her lips. And it was now *his* turn to start and tremble with *more* than compassionate emotion.

The slight motion of her head had so changed its position that the lower part of the face became visible, and flash after flash of the brilliant gas-lights lit up this pallid face (so far as it was revealed) with ghastly distinctness. He gazed with a searching intentness that seemed to concentrate all sense and feeling in that deep scrutiny. Those features were *not* strange to him. And yet—"So white! so shrunken! so drawn! It could not be,"

and he let fall the hand that had been instinctively raised to remove the overshadowing bonnet. But his anxiety was now fearful impatience; his agitation almost incontrollable. He listened for her breathing, but his sense of hearing was impeded by the throbbing of his own arteries; and thus, with a sudden consciousness of the necessity of self-command, by a strong effort he subdued himself to quietness, if not composure—to be prepared for —for whatever it was appointed him to encounter.

It was well he did so. The coach stopped; the door was opened; the step let down; and the broad glare of light fell full upon his insensible burden. He lifted her out with steady quiet caution, and, as he did so, the untied bonnet fell from her head. There upon his shoulders lay that lifeless head; and he looked down upon the pale still face—(still as marble, and seemingly as cold) —looked down upon it fixedly and steadily. Doubt was no more: conjecture at an end: and with certainty came calmness and power. He neither started, faltered, nor exclaimed, but bore his charge into the house; explained, arranged, and directed all with prompt and perfect self-possession; and yet the face he had looked upon—(he took but one fixed look)—was the face of her who had been his own Fanny Fairfield!

It was about the close of a mild pleasant afternoon of the second week in February, that a neat covered cart, drawn by a sleek strong-built old mare, and driven by a clean fresh-coloured carter, was seen advancing at a slow steady pace up the gradual ascent which struck across from the great London road to the Grange farm. At the door of the old house, just within its massy spacious porch, stood Aunt Amy and Mary, watching the advancing vehicle with eyes whose earnest gaze was dimmed by gathering moisture, as tender thoughts and recollections crowded into the minds of both, and a deep sense of contrasting circumstances. As the last drew near, a rosy-cheeked damsel, who had been waiting behind her mistress, ran forward to set open the fore-court gate, and be ready with her services. But before Ralph, with a general nod of recognition and greeting, had given his final "Whoy!" and wheeled round the cart (which opened behind) to a convenient station, Frank's hand was on the door-handle, and, before the wheels stopped, he sprang out

and ran forward to meet and return the affectionate greeting that awaited him. Then, after a whispered word or two, he turned again, followed by his Aunt and Mary, and, leaning into the cart, spoke in a low voice to the shame-struck creature, who, now that the moment was come for meeting under her debasing circumstances the virtuous friends of her days of innocence, shrunk back under the shelter that still hid her from their eyes, and almost groaned aloud in the anguish of her humiliation — "To the mountains, fall on *me*, and to the hills, cover *me*."

"Fanny! my child," said kind Aunt Amy, pressing close up beside her nephew, and slipping in her hand to seek that of the shrinking invalid he was gently drawing forward with words of cheerful encouragement —"Fanny! my child—welcome home, my poor girl! Here are none but friends; Mary and I; your own old friends, Fanny!"—and Mary's hand had already found its way into the cart; and, as the poor wanderer felt its warm pressure, and that of her aged friend, she clasped both to her bosom—and bowing down her head upon them, wept sweet and bitter tears. Then, calmed and relieved by the salutary effusion, she resigned herself to Frank's sustaining arms, and, lifting her light wasted form from the mattress, he bore her under the shelter of his own roof; Aunt Amy walking beside, and still retaining one poor thin hand in hers; and Mary hastening forward to arrange the pillows in the large easy chair set ready by the screened hearth for her reception. It was not till she was comfortably settled in it that they took more than a cursory glance of that face and form in which the ravages of sorrow, sickness, and remorse, had wrought such fearful alteration. Divested of her deep mourning bonnet and cloak, there she lay back on the cushioned chair with a face white as the pillow that supported her head, but for a faint flush on either hollow cheek, and the blue tracery of the veins on the sunken temples and marble brow, over which no vagrant lock strayed from beneath the close borders of her widow's cap. And those pale half-transparent hands! what a tale of weakness and decay was in the powerless languor with which they had fallen into that listless form upon her lap; their bloodless hue so strongly contrasted by the black gown on which they lay. Could *that* be Fanny

Fairfield? For a moment the aunt and niece gazed on that helpless form, and in each other's face, as if in mutual enquiry; while, exhausted by her recent agitation, she lay, as described, motionless and silent, with her eyes shut, as if in sleep or swooning. But tears still trickled from beneath those closed lids; and soon in some measure recovering herself, she looked slowly and timidly up into the kind faces that bent over her; and, turning from one to the other, whispered faintly, "Oh, Aunt Amy! oh, Mary! *can* you be so good to such a sinner? Fanny's days were numbered; and of the brief account few remained to be told over when she was brought to the Grange. On the next Sabbath but one, when the congregation of Holywell Church met together for afternoon service, a deeper hush—a more than wonted stillness pervaded the assembly. Serious and sad, or gravely thoughtful, was the expression of every face, except that of innocent childhood, full of eager curiosity or wondering awe, and all eyes were turned to the centre of the middle aisle, where a bier, resting on trestles, supported a coffin, covered by its long black flowing pall. In the Grange pew adjoining sat three persons habited in mourning. The deep irrepressible sob of a young loving heart was heard at intervals from one of the two female mourners, and more than once she turned an anguished eye toward that long, black, shapeless mass. The aged woman, her companion, gazed on it oftener and more steadily, with a look of meek and placid sorrow, beseeming one who had ou lived all passionate but not all tender feeling. None saw the face of the third person—no, not from the moment when he appeared first and alone of the few persons following the corpse—nor during the whole time of divine service, or of the affecting burial service in church and at the grave—nor when, at the solemn words of "dust to dust," and the sound of earth rattling on the coffin, he shuddered with a visible shudder—when all was over, he turned away and departed, in silence and alone, followed only by the solicitous looks and secret prayers of his two fellow-mourners.

# THE DISCOVERERS OF MADEIRA.

## A TALE.

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AMONG all the beauties that graced the court of England in the warlike reign of Edward III., the fairest and most admired was Anna d'Arfet, the only child of an illustrious house, and heiress of its extensive possessions. Up till the period of this young lady's presentation at the court, she had mingled only with her own sex, with the exception of the venerable chaplain of the family, a good and intelligent monk, from whom Anna had received an education of so elevated a kind as almost to unfit her for mingling in the society of that rude and untaught time. Her beauty, too, was of that tender and refined cast which suited well with the culture and elegance of her mind, and made her seem, when transplanted amongst the sister beauties of the court, like the lily, with its slender and graceful stem, beside the ruddy and hardy rose.

The sensitive disposition of Anna d'Arfet had been fostered by the unhappy condition of her mother, who repined in secret over the conduct of a husband whom she deeply loved. The Baron d'Arfet was a soldier, one of the bravest of the many nobles who fought at Cressy and Poitiers; but, whatever was his bravery in the field, his conduct in private life in the midst of his family was churlish and, to the last degree, discourteous. Deeply but uncomplainingly did the mother of Anna feel the inattention of her lord; and, in the mind of the sympathising daughter, a strong impression of dislike to the wars which caused this unhappiness, found naturally a place. She would have been con-

tent to have spent her life, apart from the world, in soothing in retirement the griefs of her gentle parent, but the commands of the baron forced the baroness and herself to make their appearance at the court. This took place on the occasion of the triumphal return of the Black Prince from his foreign wars, with King John of France a captive in his train.

After a residence at court for some months, the stern nature of the baron began to make its appearance, and to cause his wife and daughter to long for the solitude of Castle d'Arfet. Anna's beauty had attracted many suitors, who, almost unavoidably, were of the same character with her father. The rough manners of these warlike spirits were not, it may be imagined, likely to engage the heart of the timid and sensitive Anna; and an event also occurred, which left her without a heart to bestow on any of the noble companions of her sire. The Baron of Berkley was the suitor whose pretensions the father of Anna encouraged; but of all others he was the most disagreeable to her. He had the reputation of being a successful but cruel soldier abroad, and the dungeons of his castle at home, on the shores of the Severn, had, it was reported, been the scene of many a barbarous deed. In those times of feudal despotism, the world in general treated lightly such insinuations; but Anna d'Arfet never looked on the stern and even savage lineaments of her suitor's countenance, without reading there the impress of blood and cruelty. Thus, though she dared not to disobey her father's injunction to receive the addresses of Berkley with respect, her heart revolted from the thought of an union with one whose character she abhorred. Her father easily observed this dislike, which, in truth, she could not conceal, and commanded her to alter her deportment to him who was destined to be her husband. The tears of his daughter made no impression on the stern d'Arfet, and miserable was the prospect that lay before Anna. The Baron of Berkley himself was not slow to perceive her dislike to him; and, being of a nature equally impatient and rugged, he resolved to prosecute his addresses no longer in the tedious manner which he had hitherto followed, and in which he had made so little progress towards the accomplishment of his object. Depending on her father's friendship for him, he laid a plan for carrying off Anna to Berk-

ley Castle, where he doubted not he would speedily find means to force the surrender of her hand.

The plot was to a certain extent successful. In the garden of her father's mansion, Anna d'Arfet was seized by a small band of Berkley's retainers, who placed her, in despite of her entreaties and cries, on horseback behind one of the party, and hurried her off to the spot where the contriver of the scheme awaited the result. But before his victim could be placed in his hands, her cries for help, which her captors could not wholly suppress, reached the ears of those who were able and willing to rescue her. A party of men-at-arms, belonging to the household of the king, were accidentally passing in the neighbourhood, under the command of a young knight, who, on hearing the voice of a female, rode hastily up and commanded those who were forcing her away to halt. An attempt to cut him down was the only reply from the followers of Berkley; but, avoiding their blows, the knight struck his chief assailant to the earth. Being speedily joined by his companions, he easily rescued the fainting lady from the hands of her captors, who, after a hurried resistance, fled, leaving one of their companions mortally wounded behind them. Soothing, by assurances of safety and protection, the agitated Anna, the knight placed her on his own palfrey, and, with the gentlest care, conducted her in the direction she pointed out as that of her home, from which indeed she had not yet been carried many miles away.

The youth who had thus delivered the Lady Anna d'Arfet was a son of the ancient family of Markham. He had entered the service of the Black Prince, and was distinguished as much for gallantry and courage as he was for the elegance of his person and sweetness of his manners. His gentle deportment made a strong impression on the mind of Anna, and not less was Robert Markham struck with the extreme loveliness of her whom he had had the good fortune to rescue. In short, before reaching the mansion of d'Arfet, emotions were excited in the hearts of both with respect to each other, which time could never afterwards eradicate.

The duration of Anna's absence had not been so great as to alarm the family of d'Arfet; but, when she arrived at her home,

and narrated the danger she had escaped through the gallantry of Markham, even the baron was sincere in his expressions of gratitude to the brave deliverer. For a space of several months succeeding to this affair, the visits of Markham to the family of d'Arfet were permitted by the baron, who never conceived for an instant the possibility of a private gentleman daring to love the daughter of a house that had matched with princes. But love is no herald, and Markham and Anna loved each other deeply. The baron's first suspicion of this was suggested by the disappointed Berkley, who astonished the angry father still more by confessing himself to have been the author of the abduction of Anna. Berkley excused himself by representing the hopelessness of succeeding by any other method, and wrought upon d'Arfet, not only to forgive what had been done, but procured also his consent to repeat the attempt. Thus it chanced, that on the day in which Markham first dared to disclose his passion to the object of it, and heard from her lips a confession of its being returned, on that day was Anna d'Arfet a second time carried off from her father's house.

It is impossible to describe the agony of Markham on learning from the baroness what had taken place. All search was in vain, as it may well be supposed, since the baron, who set on foot the inquiry, purposely directed it to every quarter but that in which it might have been successful. For several days Markham rushed from place to place with the restless impetuosity of a madman, and, after finding every endeavour fruitless, seemed about to sink into a condition of despair, from which he was only aroused by the recollection that the man still lived who had been wounded in the former abduction. By Markham's own directions this man had been conveyed at the time to a place where care could be shown to him, and the lover, out of a belief that he was an ordinary robber, had at first pitied his condition, and then forgotten him. But now the idea occurred that both abductions might be the work of one person—too probably a rival—and Markham flew to discover, if possible, where the wounded man had been lodged. He learnt this without difficulty, and, on speeding to the place, found the person whom he sought almost recovered from his wounds. The man had had time to reflect on

the errors of his past life, and, being at the same time grateful to Markham for the care which had been taken of him, he was not unwilling to communicate to the young lover every circumstance of the former attempt. On hearing the account, Markham was deeply moved, and became convinced that the Baron of Berkley was the author also of the second plot. Roger Penderell—for such was the name of the wounded man—confirmed this suspicion, by assuring him that Berkley would never cease his endeavours till successful. Determined to allow nothing to remain untried for the relief of Anna, Markham brought away Roger in his company, in hopes that he might be useful in any future enterprise. Whether this expectation was to be realised or not, will be seen in the sequel.

Not many weeks had elapsed when a small sloop might have been seen, in the moonlight, riding at anchor in the mouth of the Severn. From the shore it appeared like an indistinct speck of dark cloud, and a small party of men gazed on it from a promontory on the cost, under shelter of which a little boat lay calmly on the glistening waters. These men were conversing with each other anxiously, and, ever and anon, when they turned their eyes from the speck on the waves, they directed them to a castle not far inland behind them, the turreted outline of which was seen distinctly against the clear horizon.

In a few minutes, a voice from the landward was heard loudly calling for the boat. The party were instantly on the alert: some leapt into the boat and took to their oars, while the others drew their weapons, and darted forwards in the direction of the voice which hailed them. They had not advanced a step or two, when two persons made their appearance a short way off, one of them bearing in his arms what appeared, from the lifeless position in which the head hung upon his shoulder, to be the dead body of a lady. "To the boat, friends, as you value your lives! They have discovered the escape, and are close behind us!" The men came up to the boat, but all stood aside till the speaker entered with his burden, after which they followed his example. "Row, men, row," cried Markham, for it was he. The men bent to their oars, and in a few minutes were scudding lightly in the direction of the sloop, which became more and more visible

every moment in the bright moonshine. Meanwhile, the deep baying of bloodhounds, that boomed over the waves from the shore, showed the narrow escape which the fugitives had made. But the little party, and particularly its commander, paid little attention to the proceedings on land. "Anna!" cried he, "speak to me; all is well! You are free! Oh," exclaimed he, in a tone of deep and agonised distress, "the terror and agitation have killed her! Some water, friends; she recovers!" And, indeed, in a few minutes Anna d'Arfet raised her head, and became sensible of her situation; but, on finding herself alone amongst strangers, and all these men, is it to be wondered that the timid and gently-nurtured maiden hid her head, and clung again to the bosom of him whom she loved, who had saved her from a fate worse than death? It is impossible to describe the mingled feelings that agitated the bosom of Robert Markham, as he pressed to his breast her whom he had twice saved, and who was now his own for ever. At one moment his thoughts were all joy; at another, fears for the fair and fragile flower who, for his sake, had trusted herself to the mercy of the waves, were predominant in his mind.

The instant that the party reached the sloop, the anchor was weighed, and, with a gentle and favourable breeze, the vessel stood out to sea. It is scarcely necessary, we believe, to say a word in explanation of the escape just described. Roger Penderell had, by Markham's directions, returned to the service of the Baron of Berkley, and not only found the Lady Anna d'Arfet in the baron's castle, but had the good fortune, as was mentioned, to be appointed one of her keepers. The lady had hitherto had fortitude to resist the menaces and severity of her keeper, but her mind and body would have speedily sunk in the struggle. She clung rapturously to the hope which Roger's presence held out to her, and we have seen how these hopes were fulfilled. Markham had, on his part, employed all his means in providing a vessel for their escape, and had engaged a trusty band of comrades to assist them in flying to a happier land. To soothe the mind of her whom he knew to be the most delicate-minded of her sex, he had prevailed on a poor and humble friar to go on board the little vessel, that

he might be united to Anna, and gain a right to watch over and protect her for ever.

The intention of Markham was to sail directly for the coast of France, with his small bark, which was not well calculated for a longer voyage. On the day succeeding to their escape, they had made clear of the English shores, and looked forward to a speedy termination of their course. But the second night was unlike the first. The clear light of the full moon was changed to a gloom like the periodic darkness of the polar regions. In place of a soft and sighing breeze, a wild and roaring wind shook the fragile timbers of the bark, and the sea no longer rocked the vessel gently on its bosom, but heaved it fearfully to and fro, till all knowledge of their position was lost by every man on board. For several hours, the vessel drove here and there at the mercy of wind and wave. Markham struggled for a long time to retain the guiding reins of the little bark, but at last gave up the task in despair. And what did the timid maiden, who was now his wife? Worn out by past distresses, she was now perfectly helpless, and could only cling to her sole protector, following him wherever he went, that they might meet, together at least, the fate which seemed every moment impending over their heads.

Day, though it calmed a little the fury of the tempest, brought no true consolation to the occupants of the vessel. They found themselves in the midst of an unknown sea, and none of them possessed skill enough to determine their situation. Many days and nights passed, and still their condition was the same—sea, boundless sea, on all sides. At length, on the twelfth morn, when the grey clouds steered slowly from the east before the dawning sun, the bark was found to be close upon land. Many times had their anxious eyes deceived them, but now their hopes were doomed to be fulfilled. As they approached nearer, the shore of what appeared to be an island was most distinctly seen, and unknown birds, of beautiful and variegated plumage, came from the land and careered around the masts of the bark. Immense forests of trees appeared to clothe the island, as the tempest-tossed mariners neared its beautiful shores.

After a boat had been sent out to explore, and brought back a favourable account, Markham conveyed his pale and trembling wife on shore, and cheered her with the prospect of remaining on solid land till they could ascertain correctly their position. A party was left with the vessel, and those who had landed proceeded to explore the interior of the country. An opening in the luxuriant woods, which was festooned with shrubs of the loveliest kind, presented to the wave-worn voyagers a most delightful retreat; and, under the shade of a venerable tree, red in colour as the rose, Markham constructed a beautiful residence with the abundant materials around them. Here they abode for many days, making incursions into the woods; and such was the influence of the delightful climate, and of the total absence of every cause that could disturb her peace and rest, that the cheek of Anna once more resumed the glow of health, and her step recovered its wonted elasticity. Many of the voyagers, however, soon became weary of their situation, and longed so much to see again inhabited land, that they were willing to trust themselves once more to the stormy and fickle element from which they had been so mercifully saved. To Markham such a plan was frightful, for he saw in it the destruction, a second time, of his wife's returning peace and health. Besides, Anna herself was most averse to the attempt, and Markham resolved to remain with his wife in their beautiful though lonely island, and to offer the vessel to those who wished to depart. The offer was accepted, and Markham found only Roger Penderell, out of all the party, desirous to remain with the pair to whom he had been so serviceable.

For many, many years after the departure of their companions, did Markham and Anna enjoy that quiet and happiness in their lone island home, which was denied to them among their fellow-creatures. Their lives passed in unbroken repose; nor did any of them ever repent of the step they had taken in choosing a place of abode. The earth, almost of itself, afforded them food, and the beautiful birds which they had observed on landing became accustomed to their presence, and supplied the place of the friends from whom the hand of fate had parted them.

And when the angel of death came to call them from their place of temporary rest to an abode of eternal peace, Markham and Anna were laid, by the hands of their faithful follower, in one grave, under a spreading and venerable tree. And this pair of lovers, gentle reader, were the discoverers of Madeira. (1)

(1) However romantic and improbable the above tale may appear, it is nearly conformable to historical truth.

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# DELICATE ATTENTIONS.

## A TALE.

BY MR. POOLE.

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"WHY, Gingerly!" exclaimed Tom Damper, as he entered the public drawing-room at Mrs. Bustle's Boarding-House, at Brighton; "Why, Gingerly! this is one of the finest days of the season; all the world is out enjoying it, yet here are you, at three o'clock, sitting alone, on the self-same chair, in the self-same attitude, and looking through the self-same pane of glass, as at eleven this morning when I left you. What ails you?"

Gingerly made no reply; but breathed on one of the panes of glass, drew the letter B on it with his forefinger, and heaved a sigh.

"You are the oddest fellow in the universe," continued Damper. "We have been here nearly a month, yet, since about the third day after our arrival, you have hardly stirred out of the house."

"It is a very nice house," said Gingerly; and he heaved a heavier sigh than before.

"It was at my recommendation you came to it," said Damper; "but, though I am not insensible to the merits of the inside of it, its outside also has many charms for me. Again I ask, what ails you?"

"Damper!" said Gingerly.

"Well."

"Damper!" repeated Gingerly, with a sigh.

"You said that before."

"Damper—were you ever in love?"

"I was never out of it till I had turned five-and-forty; but being, at this present talking, within two months of fifty, and a bachelor moreover, I should think myself a fool were I in such a scrape now. You, who are by five years my senior, of course are not."

Gingerly made no reply; but, sighing profoundly, took his handkerchief from his pocket and smeared out the large flourishing B which he had just before drawn. There was a pause of a minute.

"Damper—may I trust you with a secret?"

"Yes—so it be not a love-confidence."

"In that case, my dear friend, I shall have nothing to thank you for."

"Seriously now, my dear Gingerly, do you mean to say you are in love?"

"Gingerly expended another sigh, again turned towards his favourite pane, and re-instated his big bouncing B.

"O, Damper!" at length he exclaimed, "if you had a heart you would feel for me."

"I should if I saw you hanging, or drowning, or suffering under any reasonable trouble; but to feel for an old bachelor of fifty-five in love, and for the first time in his life, too!—Ridiculous! But, come; I suppose I must listen to you, so tell me all about it."

"And who so proper as you for the confidence, when you are to blame for the accident?"

"I!" exclaimed Damper, with unfeigned surprise.

"Yes, you," answered Gingerly; "because but for your recommendation I never should have set foot in Mrs. Bustle's boarding-house."

"So, then, it is some one in this house who has smitten your susceptible old heart?" said Damper, with a laugh. And he continued: "I think I can name the tender fair one."

"To be sure you can," replied Gingerly.

"It is old Widow Swillswallow, who eats and drinks from morning till night, and is heard, by all in the house, snoring from night till morning."

"Faugh!" exclaimed Gingerly with a shudder of disgust.

"Or old Miss Fubsworth, who was born on the day of the coronation of George the Third?"

"Absurd!" exclaimed Gingerly.

"Then it must be old Widow Waddilove; for she is the only other lady-lodger here."

"Preposterous!" cried Gingerly, somewhat angrily. "Old *this*, and old *that!* Is there nobody else you can think of?"

"There is but one other," replied Damper; "in which case I am sorry for you. You have not the slightest chance in that quarter; for Mrs. Bustle is engaged to be married to Captain O'Popper."

"*Mistress* Bustle! Pooh! Can't you think of *one* more."

"There is not one more, except, indeed, her daughter, Betsy."

"Well!" said Gingerly.

"Well!" echoed Damper. "You can't be thinking of her."

"And why not? She is very pretty?"

"True," replied Damper; "but you forget that she is also very young."

"No," said Gingerly; "that's the very thing I am thinking about. She is eighteen: a delicious age! Surely, now, you don't pretend that a girl of eighteen is too young for me!"

"Not a day," replied Damper, somewhat drily; "but I, who am your junior, should think myself too old for a girl of eighteen."

"I don't care for that, my good friend. I am my own master, have an unencumbered nine hundred a-year, am not troubled with a relation in the world—and—and—in short, I'm resolved to marry Betsy Bustle." Saying which, he flourished half a dozen B's with an air of unconquerable determination.

Damper gave him a twirl round, and stared him full in the face.

"Gingerly," said he; "if your head were not as bald of hair as an apple, I should advise you to go this moment and get it shaved, for you are mad—stark staring mad. Fifty-five and eighteen! If you *do* marry Miss Bustle, my fine fellow, look out for squalls."

"Of course," replied Gingerly, with a look of extreme simplicity; "I must expect that our children will squall just the same as other people's."

"You misunderstand me; I say, if you do marry Betsy Bustle, remember that there is already a lover in the case."

"Damper, don't say so," cried Gingerly.

"There is," continued the consoling friend; "there is, or I am much mistaken. A favoured lover, too; favoured by the daughter, by the mother, and, which is of no little importance, by Captain O'Popper also — the Captain, as you know, being as much master here as if he and Mrs. Bustle were already united."

Gingerly turned pale, and big drops rolled from his brow. For some time he was unable to speak. At length, with faltering voice, he inquired of Damper what grounds he had for his belief.

"Chiefly this," replied the latter: "I have frequently heard her speak to her mother about a certain George; and from the tone in which she always utters the name——"

"Then I am the happiest man alive!" joyfully exclaimed Gingerly. "My name is George."

"But," said the imperturbable friend, "she sometimes speaks of him as '*young* George.'"

"And what then? I never told her my age; and she is not obliged to know that I am fifty, or so. I tell you what, Damper; that I am the object of her tender thoughts I am now certain—that is to say, *almost* certain. Now I would have proof of it, and *that* you must obtain for me."

"I have already told you I will have nothing to do with a love-confidence," coolly replied Damper.

"But you must, my dear Damper; for this once you must—unless you wish to see your poor friend throw himself from the head of the chain-pier, souse into the sea."

As Gingerly uttered these words with something like earnestness, his friend, unwilling to be accessory to such a catastrophe, consented, after some further entreaty, to undertake the task:—not without thinking to himself that should Gingerly actually marry the girl, he would be the greatest fool in the universe—excepting only the girl herself for marrying him.

"Now," said Gingerly, "I must first of all confess to you that I am the most timid man alive—I mean in love matters—and that is why I have never popped the question to mortal woman. Indeed, as to popping the question at all, it is a thing I could

not do where I to live a thousand years. Pop! To a delicate-minded man the very word itself is a horrid word. I could as soon pop a pistol at a woman's head as the question at her heart. No: if I succeed, as I am sure I shall, in ensnaring the heart of my charming Betsy, it will be, not by any daring manœuvre, but by sly approaches, by little gallanteries, by delicate attentions, such as the female heart only can appreciate, such as no female heart can resist."

"And when do you mean to begin?" said Damper.

"I shall astonish you, my dear fellow, I know I shall: I *have* begun. I have already made one step in advance, and I flatter myself you will give me some credit for the ingenuity of it. You know the new novel that every body is talking about—'The Timid Lover.' Well; the hero, Mortimer St. Aubyn de Mowbray Fitz-Eustaceville, is a character exactly resembling me—timid as I am—something younger, to be sure; but that does not signify—and the heroine is very much like Miss Bustle. Yesterday I bought the book—paid a guinea and a-half for it, as I hope to be saved: and sent it anonymously to Betsy—*anonymously*—do you mark the delicate attention?"

"I do," replied Damper; "but, for the life of me, I can't discover the ingenuity of the proceeding."

"It consists in this—and that is the point you must assist me in. Nearly at the end of the first volume there is a situation of great interest, where the timid lover first hints at his passion for the heroine. I put a piece of paper into the book to mark the place, and Miss Bustle *must* have noticed it. Now I want you to draw from her whether, in reading that passage—for I saw her reading it last night—she thought of me. If she did, she is mine. That I call both delicate and ingenious."

At this moment Miss Betsy entered the room, and, greatly to the satisfaction of Gingerly, with a volume of the "Timid Lover" in her hand. Gingerly having whispered to his friend that now was the time for the experiment, he cast a look of ludicrous tenderness at the young lady, stammered a few words which were utterly unintelligible, and went out for a walk; but with the intention of soon returning to learn the result of Damper's inquiries.

"What a funny gentleman!" exclaimed Miss Bustle, as Gingerly made his retiring bow.

Funny! thought Damper; that is not a very promising epithet for the timid lover.

"His manners are much altered since he first came here," continued Miss Bustle. "*Then* he was very talkative; *now* he scarcely ever utters a word. And he gives one such comical looks, too! Captain O'Popper said yesterday that one would think he is casting sheep's eyes at somebody or other—though I don't know what that means. But he is a nice old man, after all. I wonder, though, he does not wear a wig; his old bald head shines so one can almost see one's face in it. I don't think such a *very* bald head is pretty.

It will not be expected that Damper was much encouraged by these observations to proceed on his friend's behalf; but, having undertaken his cause, he resolved against abandoning it.

"Miss Bustle," said he, "you are mistaken concerning Mr. Gingerly upon one point: he is not old—not remarkably old."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Miss Bustle; "how one may be deceived by appearances! He looks a great deal older than my poor, dear, dead-and-gone grandpapa, who was sixty-three when he died."

"He is nothing like so old as that," said Damper; "and then, Miss Bustle—and then, he is rich." This last word did Damper emphasise in a way to produce an effect—and so it did.

"Rich!" responded Miss Bustle; "is he indeed? Lord how I should like to have *him*—for a grandpapa. I dare say he is very kind to *his* grandchildren."

The learned advocate, perceiving that he had taken nothing by his motion, fell back upon the point on which he had been chiefly instructed; and merely explaining, by the way, that, as his friend was unmarried, it was impossible he should have children, and that, therefore, grandchildren were out of the question, he went at once to the subject of the book.

"Is that a new work you are reading, Miss Bustle?"

"Yes, Sir; it is the 'Timid Lover,' and is only just out."

"You are fortunate in getting it so early from a circulating-library," observed Damper, pretending ignorance of the fact.

"Anxious as I was to read it, I might have waited six weeks for it had I depended on the library, and after all, perhaps, have been obliged to read the third volume first. No, Sir, it is a present; and, although it came anonymously, I know very well who sent it. What delicate attention! Oh!" And here the young lady placed her hand upon her heart, and sighed.

Bravo! thought Damper; this will do. "And pray, Miss," said he, "is there not in it one situation of peculiar interest? I mean that where the timid lover first hints at his passion for the heroine."

"It is charming," replied Miss Betsy; "it absolutely drew tears from me!"

"And did you think of no one—*no one*—whilst you were reading it?" inquired Damper.

"Indeed I did; and I'll tell you, in confidence, who it was. I thought all the way through of Mr. Gingerly."

Well, thought Damper; there is no accounting for the freaks of the heart! And that my old friend should make a conquest of one of the prettiest girls in Brighton!"

"The two characters are so alike! except," continued Miss Bustle, "that Mr. Gingerly is *rather* the elder of the two."

"Yes, yes; I admit that my friend is a little older than the hero, Mortimer Saint-Aubyn de Mowbray Fitz-Eustaceville is represented to be."

"What!" exclaimed Miss Betsy, bursting into an immoderate fit of laughter; "think of him as the divine Fitz-Eustaceville! Shocking! No; what made me think of him was the nasty old rival, Lord Grumblethorpe, who comes in at the critical moment and prevents the declaration of love. But Fitz-Eustaceville is so like a certain person! But wasn't it a delicate attention, Mr. Damper, on the part of the *friend* who sent me the books? And, then, to put a slip of paper into that very place! Oh! it speaks volumes!!"

At this moment Mr. Gingerly returned; and Miss Bustle being summoned by a servant to go to her mamma, he and Mr. Damper were left together.

"Well," eagerly cried the timid lover; "well, have you sounded her?"

"I have," was the reply.

"She has read the passage in question?"

"Every syllable of it."

"Did it produce any effect upon her?"

"Tremendous!"

"Did she cry? That's the great point. Did she cry?"

"A bucket-full!"

"You delight me, my dear Damper. Did she notice the bit of paper? Did she speak of me? Did she remark upon the delicate attention?"

"Yes, yes, yes, yes," impatiently replied Damper. "And, now, pray don't teaze me any more about it."

"But my dear, dear Damper; did she speak much about me? and what was it she said?"

"Why—not much; but what she did say was quite conclusive."

"I told you so: I knew that by a little ingenious contrivance, by a few delicate attentions, I should make my way to her heart."

"Now, my good friend," said Damper, gravely, "prepare yourself for a ——" Damper's speech, the tendency of which would doubtless have been to undeceive his self-deluded friend, was cut short by the dinner-bell; and, as they descended to the dining-room, Gingerly declared his intention to spare neither pains nor expense to win (in his own delicate way) the affections of Miss Betsy Bustle. Damper sighed for the infatuation of poor Gingerly, and resolved, in his own mind, to save him from any aggravated disappointment, by repeating to him, at the earliest opportunity, and word for word, all that had passed in his conversation with the young lady.

When the friends entered the dining-room they found the places, all except two, occupied. These were near the head of the table, at which was seated Mrs. Bustle. Captain O'Popper did the honours at the bottom. At his left was the lovely Betsy, and next to her was a young man of about three-and-twenty. This gentleman wore a blue frock-coat of military cut, a buff waistcoat, and a military stock. He was dark; not ill-looking; had a profusion of black hair; huge whiskers; and mustachios of the fiercest:—such, indeed, as might well have excited the

envy of one of Napoleon's Old Guard. He smelt strong of cigar, and was clerk to an attorney at Shoreham. This personage was no other than George—*the* George—Mr. George Hobnill.

Gingerly cast a longing look towards the end of the table where was seated his beloved, but there was not a place vacant within eight of her. Mr. Hobnill, who occupied the seat for which the former would have given one of his ears, and whom he now saw for the first time, he inwardly wished—a long way further off than Shoreham.

"Mr. Gingerly," cried Mrs. Bustle, "as I know you are a lady's man, I have reserved *that* seat for you. You are fortunate to-day in having a lady on each side of you." This she uttered in a tone of patronage; at the same time pointing to a vacant chair between Gingerly's prime horrors—Old Widow Swillswallow and Miss Fubsworth. Damper was placed next to Widow Waddilove.

"Come, Mr. G.," mumbled Miss Fubsworth, "come between us ladies. We old folks are always best together."

The earth did not open and swallow Mr. Gingerly at a gulp, as he wished it might, for, at the moment of the utterance of these words, his eyes met those of Miss Bustle.

The dinner was provided with the usual boarding-house munificence. First, was served a huge white earthenware tureen, full to the brim of a thin nankeen-coloured liquid, on the surface of which floated a few chips of toasted bread. Mrs. Bustle, as she distributed this in copious portions amongst the company, commended her cook for her culinary ability in general, but chiefly praised her for the excellence of her "gravy-soup!"

"The only good gravy-soup in all Brighton," exclaimed Captain O'Popper; "and I'm just waiting to hear who 'll say the con*tra*ry." This proposition, uttered with an unquestionable brogue, was universally granted; at least, nobody *said* the contrary.

Then came three soles to be divided amongst fifteen bodies. This seemed to be a difficult operation; but Mrs. Bustle performed it with a degree of ingenuity which would have done honour to the mistress of any boarding-house in England. Two or three times, in the course of her occupation, she took occa-

sion to say that this was "the poorest fish-day she had ever known in Brighton."

"The only three soles in the market—barring the other three we let go to the Pavilion," said the Captain.

Next appeared, at one end of the table, a roast leg of mutton; and, at the other, a dish containing some five or six mutton-chops—very broad and very thick, with long tails of fat and gristle depending from the narrow ends of them. These were interspersed with thick slices of raw onion, and were described by Mrs. Bustle as "Cutlets *ally* sauce *peekong*"—a dish for which her cook was "particularly famous!"

"*Peekong!*" responded the Captain. "You may well say *peekong*, Madam! and I don't think there 's anybody here will contradict *that*."

The dinner was completed by an enormous [looking] gooseberry-pie, which derived its name from the half-pint of gooseberries discovered at the bottom of the dish when, after some difficulty, a breach had been effected through the thick hard crust over the top of it; together with twelve stringy radishes, one lettuce divided into quarters, and a small glass bowl-full of lumps of yellow-looking cheese, of mouse-trap size and Mac-adam substance.

"Shy fare again, to-day!" muttered a quiet little gentleman at table.

"Shy what, Sir!" exclaimed the Captain. "What 's shy, Sir? And, by the powers! is it 'shy' you are saying?"

"I—I only spoke, Captain," mildly replied the gentleman.

"I 'm satisfied, Sir," said Captain O'Popper.

"I declare, Mr. Gingerly," said Mrs. Bustle, "you have eaten no dinner: I really believe you are in love."

Gingerly was preparing a languishing look for the especial service of Miss Betsy, when the effort was paralyzed by the Captain's——

"Mr. Gingerly in love! Ha, ha, ha! At his time of life! Ha, ha, ha! Well!—better late than never, eh! my old Trojan? Ah! those sheep's eyes of your own, Daddy Gingerly! I say, Miss Fubsworth!—Mrs. Swillswallow!—take care of your hearts,

ladies. Or, come, Daddy; is it Mrs. Waddilove you may happen to be after?"

"Sir, I—a—I beg, Sir—a—I must desire—" said Gingerly, (assuming as dignified an air as his mingled confusion and vexation would allow)—"these liberties, Sir—a—I——"

The Captain, a good-natured man at heart, perceiving that he had given pain, apologised — though with far better intention than tact.

"Mr. Gingerly, Sir; I'm sorry you have taken seriously what I meant only in joke." [Mr. Gingerly bowed, and the Captain continued.] "I was wrong, though, and I'm prepared to confess it." [Here Mr. Gingerly bowed again.] "I had no right to take a freedom with a perfect gentleman like you, Sir,"—[Mr. Gingerly bowed almost down to the table.]—"who are old enough to be my grandfather;" — [Mr. Gingerly did *not* bow.] "and I ask your pardon."

Two maid-servants coming into the room with the dessert—one bringing a plate of apples, and the other a plate of biscuits!—diverted the attention of the company from the affair; and Mr. Gingerly availed himself of that opportunity to be seized with a fit of coughing, and to cover his face with his handkerchief. When he had recovered from this attack, he had the gratification of hearing the following portion of a conversation between Mr. Hobnill and Miss Bustle. As it was carried on in an under-tone he overheard no more of it than is here reported.

"Now don't deny it, George."

"*Paw* my life, not the slightest ideor."

"I'm certain * * * because * * * Fitz-Eustaceville * * * slip of paper * * * if any one else *dared*, the consequences would * * * Captain O'Popper * * * style of the thing * * * so like you, you creature!"

"If you won't believe me I can't help * * * *Paw* my honour * * * piece of im*paw*tinence * * * horsewhip * * * really not the least ideor."

"Now, it's of no use, George * * * sweetly pretty * * * I knew you'd deny it * * * if you were to swear it I wouldn't * * * folly to deny * * * you have a right, dear George, and of course

* * * been any one else * * * insolent monster! * * * delicate attention."

"* * * will think so, why, aw, * * *"

"Now that 's quite sufficient to * * * O, George! * * * elegant expedient * * * fully appreciated * * * even had I ever given you cause to doubt; but, *note* * * * susceptible heart * * * so *very* delicate an attention * * * yes, dear George, for ever!"

Could there have been the smallest doubt upon any disinterested mind as to the *filling-up* of this short conversation, or to the terms upon which it implied the whisperers to stand in relation to each other, it must have been removed by the unequivocal twist with which Mr. Hobnill indulged his mustachios at its conclusion. But Gingerly was not in a condition to think rationally. How could he? He was in love. He complained of the oppressiveness of the heat; expressed his conviction that the thermometer must suddenly have risen from seventy-five to a hundred; drew his handkerchief from his pocket, and wiped the perspiration from his glossy bald head. The next minute he wondered what could make him feel so cold. Damper recommended him to leave the room. It was not the room, however, that produced these extraordinary sensations in him; it was part of the company. But lovers, like drowning men, will catch at the slightest chance of salvation. "I will have proof more relative than this," mentally ejaculated he. He bethought him of the torn paper in Zadig, one half of which, when read by itself, was a cutting satire, but, when joined to the other, the whole turned out to be nothing more than an innocent love-poem. So may it be in this case, thought he: there was something which, certainly, was not quite agreeable in what I did hear; but had I heard all that passed it would have been a different affair. And, hereupon, he rubbed his hands, and proposed to Damper that they should have a bottle of port together. The wine was brought; and, according to the amiable fashion of boarding-houses, it played pendulum across the table, vibrating between him and his partner. And did he not invite the ladies on either side of him to take wine? No. And out of this marked neglect of them, he drew occasion for a delicate hint as to the real direction which

his affections had taken. He filled a glass, gave it to a servant, and, in a hesitating indistinct way, said something to her; at the same time pointing in the direction where Miss Bustle was placed. The girl crossed the room, and stood, with the salver in her hand, between the young lady (who was intently occupied in paring an apple) and Mr. Hobnill. To Gingerly this was an awful moment. He felt that he was committing a declaration. His tongue clove to the roof of his mouth: not a syllable could he utter. He screwed his lips up to the circumference of a pin-hole, looked hearts and darts, but dared not, for some time, raise his eyes from the table; and when, at length, he did, they met those of Mr. Hobnill!

"You are vastly *pawlite*, With great pleas*how*," said Mr. Hobnill, as he took the glass. "Your good health, Mr. Ginjawberry."

"Ere Mr. Ginjawberry (as he was miscalled by his rival) had recovered from the shock occasioned by the failure of this delicate little attention (to say nothing of seeing his wine swallowed by the man of all others for whom he could heartily have wished it had been poison), Miss Betsy had finished her operation on the apple.

"There, George," said she, as she presented it to Hobnill, "haven't I done it nicely for you?"

"Whatever *you* do *must* be nicely done," replied the favoured youth.

"Now, George, that is so like you: you do say the most elegant things!"

Gingerly swallowed the glass of wine which stood before him; filled again and swallowed that; filled again, and would have done the same thing, had not Damper, who had observed him, proposed that they should walk.

Betsy, who had caught the word, intimated to her mamma that, as she had not been out all day, she also should like a walk. Gingerly, emboldened by what he could not help considering as a delicate hint on the part of the young lady, and, perhaps, rendered somewhat less diffident by the wine he had taken, asked permission to offer the young lady his arm.

"Surely," said Mrs. Bustle.

"Gingerly was on his legs in an instant; and cast a look at his friend Damper, which, literally interpreted, meant, "What is your opinion of affairs *now*?"

"O dear! mamma," exclaimed Miss Betsy, "impossible! only think!—The idea, you know!"

"Nonsense! my love," replied Mrs. Bustle; "there can be no sort of impropriety in your walking with Mr. Gingerly.

"Confound her impudence!" muttered Gingerly.

"None in the least, Betsy," said the Captain; "it is not as if——"

"Captain O'Popper," said Gingerly, eagerly interrupting him, as if apprehensive of a disagreeable conclusion to the speech; "Captain O'Popper, I—a—Miss Bustle and I—a—" Then, turning to Hobnill, he said in a taking-it-for-granted tone, and with somewhat of an air of triumph—"You are going back to Shoreham, Sir."

"*Paw* my life," replied Hobnill (half addressing himself to Betsy)—"*Paw* my life, I hardly—I am not *paw*sitively obliged, but——"

"No, no, George," said Betsy; "there is no occasion for your returning to-night. Come and take *one* turn with this gentleman and me on the Chain-pier; and when we have brought him home again I shall want you to walk with me to my Aunt Heathfield's, at Preston."

"I am afraid, my love," said the considerate mamma, "you will be too tired to go to Preston this evening if you walk much now."

"So I should, mamma," eagerly replied Miss Bustle; "so I think I had better walk by-and-by instead. Hadn't *we*, George?"

"Tired!" exclaimed the Captain. "It's mighty ridiculous for *young* people to talk about being tired. What is it you are made of? Why, look at Mr. Gingerly there! He does not appear to be very strong on the pins; yet I dare say he, even at his age, could contrive to walk that much."

Again was Gingerly seized with a fit of coughing, which compelled him to conceal his face with his handkerchief.

"I hope, my dear Gingerly," said Damper to him, as they were taking a stroll along the Marine Parade, "I hope that, by

what you have observed this afternoon, you are cured of your folly. I speak to you as a friend, and with a friend's freedom. I observed all that passed, though, for want of opportunity, I made no remark to you upon it. 'T is clear the girl likes that vulgar puppy, that impudent attorney-ling, and looks on him as an Apollo upon earth. Rely on it you have not a chance. You have *his* black bushy head, huge whiskers, and fierce mustachios, together with your own superadundant thirty-odd years against you. So give it up, my dear fellow; like a sensible man, give it up at once."

"No, replied Gingerly; "I am more determined upon the point than before. The affair is taking precisely the turn I could have wished. I did not expect her to surrender at the first shot—I should have been disgusted if she had done so. But her reserve! her modesty! Did you not observe her timid acquiescence in my invitation to a walk?"

"'Timid acquiescence,' you call it! Unequivocal repugnance."

"Maiden coyness, I tell you. And then, that natural little piece of girlish hypocrisy, resorted to for the purpose of concealing her *real* feelings! Did you mark that? I mean her *pretending* to prefer a walk with that insignificant, impertinent, ill-bred, vulgar,——! D—n the ugly rascal!—Damper; if Mrs. Bustle allows fellows of that sort to sit down at her table, no gentleman will remain in her house. We'll go home at once and tell her so. No, no: George Gingerly is not the man to give in to a rival of *that* stamp."

"Go on, if you will," said Damper; "but the farther you proceed the more uncomfortable will you find yourself."

"By dint of delicate attentions," said Gingerly, "I 'll carry her against the world!"

"And well have your 'delicate attentions' already served you!" exclaimed the consoling Damper. "The first—the book—has turned to the advantage of the amiable Mr. George Hobnill, who, spite of his own resolute abnegation, is enjoying the entire credit of it."

"Not he!" replied Gingerly; "a coarse-minded fellow like that, would never be suspected of any thing half so elegant.

Though—ahem!—it is possible I might have cut that a little too fine. But the second—the wine—what say you to that? Fifty guineas to a shilling, if that Hobnill, or Hobnail, or whatever his vulgar name may be, had not swallowed it at the very moment when——But I 'll punish the fellow if I meet him again. I 'll overwhelm him with ridicule, and break his heart that way; I 'll *call* him Hobnail!"

It was half-past nine. They returned to their quarters at Mrs. Bustle's. In the drawing-room they found the Captain and Mrs. Bustle, in one corner, playing cribbage; and, in another, was the quiet little gentleman, fast asleep, with a newspaper on his knees. Reclining on a sofa was a youngish man, evidently dressed *at* some leader of fashion, who unquestionably knew what he himself was about; whilst the costume of the imitator, approaching, though but very little, towards caricature, proved that he (the imitator) did not. This Exquisite was engaged in picking his teeth; and (as a subsidiary employment) skimming a new novel which he had just procured from a circulating-library. For the benefit of future readers, as well as to exhibit his own fine taste and profound judgment, he occasionally made a pencil-note in the margin. These notes were brief but pithy: as, "What stuff!" "Not so bad." "You don't say so!" "I shouldn't wonder!" "*Tolarible* good!" "*Abommanubble* bad!" The commentator (as he afterwards turned out to be) was one of the "Sweetly-pootty-petturn-Mem" gentlemen from the Emporium of Fashion in Regent Street. But the principal group in the room consisted of four elderly ladies in petticoats, and three other old women in trowsers, who were squabbling at a game of penny-loo, and, in the best-bred way imaginable, accusing each other of cheating!

Gingerly looked around him in the hope of finding Miss Betsy, but she was not present. "Then," thought he, "she is fatigued by her walk, and has retired for the night."

As the clock struck ten, the Captain said to Mrs. Bustle, "This is rather too late for Betsy to be out."

"Not at all," replied Mrs. Bustle; "George, you know, is with her."

A certain athletic Irish Officer in the Life-Guards, whose nerves were not easily disordered, said, when endeavouring to illustrate

the effect produced upon him by some sudden and terrible shock, "It threw me into such a state (and truth compels me to confess it), that, by Jasus! you might have knocked me down with a poker!"

An instrument of much less power would have served to prostrate Mr. Gingerly, upon hearing the words uttered by Mrs. Bustle.

Five minutes passed away—ten—fifteen—twenty!—but no Betsy appeared. Gingerly now computed the time by seconds, and each second appeared to him an hour. He went to the window and peeped: he went to the door and listened. His bald head was steaming—he consulted the thermometer, and was astonished to find that it indicated no more than 74 deg. At length, at eleven o'clock, Miss Betsy, accompanied by *her* George, returned.

"And how did you find your Aunt Heathfield?" inquired Mrs. Bustle.

"Quite well, Mamma; and I have promised to go to her on Saturday and remain till Monday. And George is to come and take me there; and then he is to come over and pass the Sunday with us; and then George is to come on Monday and bring me home again. And, O Mamma! Cousin Harriet is come home from school, for good; and she is so delighted with George!—now don't deny it, George dear; you know it 's true—indeed, I told her that if I were not *certain* I should be jealous."

"Come, Gingerly," whispered Damper to him, "go to bed." But Gingerly was riveted to the spot!

"And, O Mamma!" continued the young lady; "we went into M'Seedling's Nursery, and saw such beautiful flowers! George insisted upon buying some for me. I chose four myrtles, four jessamines, four red-roses, and four such beautiful white rose-trees! But they would not sell them for less than a guinea-and-a-half; and, although they are such *loves*, I would not allow him to give so much for them. A guinea-and-a-half again, indeed! That would be too much."

"Too much!" exclaimed the Captain; "by the Powers! and I think so too. He had better save his money for the *occasion*." Again Damper whispered his friend "to bed."

"Well," said Betsy, "I have such a passion for flowers, that scatter the road with them and I 'm sure it would lead to my heart."

Gingerly's countenance brightened. "Come," said he to Damper (at the same time rubbing his hands), I *will* go to bed."

He wished "good night" generally. "Good night to *you*, Mister—Hob-*nail*," said he to his rival; and brought up with a significant "Ahem!" But no effect was produced by the perpetration of this heart-breaking ridicule.

"Good night, Mr. Ginjawbread," replied Hobnill; and there was a general laugh.

Utterly confused, bowing very low, placing his hand upon his heart, and attempting to look—a look!—he stammered forth, "May light slum—Miss Bet—I mean, Miss Eliz—Miss—May your downy pil—Oh! Miss Bets—goo—good afternoon." He left the room; and as he closed the door he fancied he heard a titter, and something about "sheep's eyes." When he had reached his room, he rang for a servant, to whom he gave particular orders to call him at five o'clock!

Seven o'clock of the following morning found Gingerly at M'Seedling's Nursery. The plants which had been selected by the charming Miss Betsy Bustle stood in a place apart, exactly as she left them. As he beheld them, Gingerly's heart palpitated.

"What is your price for these plants?" inquired Gingerly.

"Maybe ye're wanting them, Sir," said M'Seedling; "if so, ye'll no find their like within ten mile round."

"What is the price of them?" repeated Gingerly.

"I refused thirty-five shillings for them yester-e'en, which was offered me by a young *mee*litary gentleman and his wife, as I guess."

"D—n the military gentleman!" impatiently exclaimed Gingerly; who although he knew how much it was that M'Seedling had actually demanded for his plants, yet he did not choose, by correcting the man's memory, to expose his own knowledge of what had occurred on the previous evening. "D—n the military gentleman! What do you ask for that lot of plants?"

"Weel, Sir," replied the nurseryman; "I 'm just thinkin' I canna in conscience tak' less than twa *pund*——"

Gingerly's hand was instantly in his pocket.

"Ten," added the wily professor of the most innocent and most ancient calling on earth.

Gingerly paid the man the sum he demanded, though not without a passing reflection in his own mind on the unsettled meaning of the term "conscience."

"Now," said Gingerly, "I have paid you handsomely for these things, and I shall expect, in return, that my instructions will be strictly attended to concerning the delivery of them. They must be left at Mrs. Bustle's Boarding-house, at Brighton, at half-past nine precisely. Should the carrier be asked who sent them, he must say he doesn't know. He must simply leave the plants and, along with them, this card." Saying which, he took a card from his pocket; and, having scratched through his own name so carefully as to allow of its being read, he wrote on the other side: "These, the fairest of the vegetable creation, to the fairest of the human creation."

There! thought Gingerly, as he retraced his steps to Brighton; I think, my *military* gentleman, I have now done *your* business for you. The hint about strewing the road to her heart with flowers was pretty plain: and I have strewed it to the tune of two-pound-ten. The card is ingeniously contrived, though sending it is a bold step, certainly; but it will prevent mistake. At any rate, Master Hobnail, you shall not smuggle my trophies this time. "These, the fairest of the vegetable creation, to the fairest of the human creation!" That's a touch above an attorney's clerk, I flatter myself. A delicate attention, and elegantly contrived!

For reasons best known to himself, Gingerly, on this particular occasion, took his breakfast at the York. His walk had given him an appetite, which he inflicted, in all its vigour, upon the cold chicken, and ham, and eggs, and rolls, which were placed before him. This ended, he returned to Mrs. Bustle's; and appeared in the eating-room just as the general breakfast was served. The party consisted of the same persons as were assembled at dinner on the day before, and Hobnill was seated next to Miss Betsy as upon that occasion. Gingerly was so fortunate

as to find a chair immediately opposite to his idol, and next to him was his friend Damper.

"Don't you take anything, Mr. Gingerly?" said Mrs. Bustle to him, after he had sat some time unoccupied at table.

"I——I 'll take half a cup of weak tea, thank you, Madam," replied he, in a tender tone, and with a sigh.

"But don't you eat anything, Sir?"

"I——I have no appetite," was the reply, and with the same accompaniments.

"Then, decidedly, you *are* in love," continued the lady.

By the most fortunate concurrence of circumstances—(fortunate for Gingerly's cause)—even whilst Mrs. Bustle was uttering these words, Jenny, one of the maids, entered the room.

"Please, mum," said Jenny, "hasn't nobody ordered no flowers to be sent here?"

Gingerly turned pale, and his heart beat against his side as if it would have jumped through his waistcoat.

"Not that I am aware of," replied Mrs. Bustle. And, having looked enquiringly round the table without receiving any reply, she continued: "No, Jenny; it is a mistake; they are not for here."

Jenny went out, but presently returned. "Please, mum, the man says he is sure on it as how they are for here; he says Mrs. Bustle's boarding-house, quite distinct; and he had a card to leave along with them, only he had the misfort'n to lose it by the way, which, howsomever, isn't of no consequence, as he has found the house without it."

Gingerly's heart sank in his bosom.

"Do go, Betsy, my love, and see what all this is about," said Mrs. Bustle.

Betsy obeyed. Scarcely had she left the room, when, with eyes sparkling with joy, she bounded in again.

"O, George! she exclaimed, "how *very* foolish of you! It is a delicate attention, truly delicate, indeed! but you shouldn't have done it."

"Done it! done what?" inquired George.

"Now, how silly it is of you to pretend astonishment, George, dear—Go, Jenny, and see those flowers taken *very* carefully up

into my room.—O, Mamma! they are such loves!—It is very foolish of you, George; but, certainly, never anything in my life gave me half so much pleasure!"

"*Paw* my life, Betsy, I'm *paw*fectly ignorant of what you mean," said Hobnill.

"You ridiculous creature! where is the use of your denying it, when they are the very plants, every one of them, which I selected last night, and you tried to bargain for."

"I *saw*lemnly declaor ——"

"What's the meaning of all this?" exclaimed Captain O'Popper. "If you didn't send Betsy those plants, Mr. George, why, somebody else did; and as nobody else has the smallest right in the universal world to take such a liberty, that other somebody, whoever he may be, is an impertinent fellow. There's a bit of logic for you. But I'll beat about till I discover who this somebody is; and then we shall see whether Mr. Somebody or Captain O'Popper is the best man at ten paces."

"Lord, Sir!" said Betsy, "it *is* George.—Now—now, hold your tongue, George, and don't deny it, unless you'd make me very angry. I knew them every one again the instant I saw them. Besides," added she (at the same time bestowing upon him a tender look, and gently placing the tips of her delicate fingers on his arm),—"besides, dear George, it is so completely your style of thing!"

George, finding denial to be in vain, relinquished the contest. He looked at his watch, rose from table, and announced the necessity of his return to Shoreham.

That's something, and be hanged to him! thought Gingerly.

"And *must* you go back this morning, George?" inquired Betsy. "Well, if you must——But just stop a moment." She ran out of the room, and, after the lapse of a few minutes, returned with a handful of flowers. "Here, George," she said (as she placed one of them in his button-hole, and put the others, carefully made up in a sheet of writing-paper, into his hand), "take these. I plucked some of the most beautiful of them for you, for no one has a better right to them than *you*. Good by, George!—And, George; be sure you come back to dinner to-

day, for I shall want you to walk with me to Aunt Heathfield's again this evening."

The feelings of poor Gingerly, during this scene, may be (to use a phrase, the originality of which is not insisted upon), may be more easily conceived than described. The rival having fairly taken his departure, Gingerly rose from his seat, walked to the window, back again to the table, resumed his seat, rose, walked towards the fire-place, once more to the window, then to the door, and—out he rushed.

"Is your friend ill?" said Mrs. Bustle to Damper.

"I fear so," replied Damper; "I 'll follow him." But Damper knew very well the cause of his friend's disorder.

Damper sought Gingerly all over the house, but he was nowhere to be found. He then went out—paced the Marine Parade—traversed the Steyne—East Cliff—West Cliff—up one street—down another—looked into all the libraries—but to no purpose. He neither saw, nor could he hear anything of, Gingerly. He became alarmed. He went to the Chain-pier, and walked, hurriedly, to the end of it. But there was no Gingerly! "Can he have been so rash!" exclaimed Damper. One of the men belonging to the Pier was sitting smoking a pipe on the signal-gun. Damper approached him. With some hesitation, Damper said, "Pray—pray, my good friend—have you seen an elderly gentleman throw himself into the sea within these two hours?"

The man deliberately took his pipe from his mouth, did what smokers are in the habit of doing upon such an occasion, and, after leisurely scratching his head, said—

"An elderly gentleman, Sir?—Let me see!—an *elderly* gentleman. Why—a—no, Sir I can't say as I have. But if I should see e'er a one in the course of the a'ternoon, where shall I have the pleasure of letting you know?"

Damper retraced his steps, and soon, to his great joy, met Gingerly. The latter allowed him no time to speak, but thus, at once, accosted him:—

"It is awful! truly awful! Would you believe it? That rascally attorney's clerk who walked off with those flowers—with the credit of the little act of gallantry, too—they were my flowers—it was I who sent them."

"I would have sworn it," replied Damper. "To repeat Miss Betsy's words, it was 'so completely your style of thing.' But let me congratulate you on finding you alive: I began to fear you had committed some desperate act."

"Why, no, I have not yet done so. An ingenious expedient has occurred to me;—I'll try it—I don't think it can fail, for the dear girl has a great deal of feeling."

"True," replied Damper, "but not one particle for you. Be wise, book a place in the four o'clock coach, and return to town. All your ingenious expedients, all your delicate attentions, have turned to the advantage of the interesting Hobnill; and take my word for it that——"

"I won't listen to anything you can say," cried Gingerly, interrupting him. "This *cannot* fail—at least if you will second me in it."

For some time Damper refused to have anything more to do with the affair; but, upon Gingerly's promise that, should his next delicate attention be no more successful than the others, he would abandon the pursuit of the fair Betsy, and return to his quiet chambers in Lyon's Inn: Damper undertook to assist him. Thus pledged, he listened patiently to Gingerly's instructions; the result of which is now to be shown.

"You seem agitated, Mr. Damper," said Betsy, who was sitting alone in the drawing-room when he entered.

"Why, the fact is, Miss Bustle—I—I am afraid to acquaint you with it, but soon or later you must know it;" replied Damper, who was almost ashamed of the ridiculous commission he had undertaken.

"Good Heavens! what has happened?" exclaimed she.

"Why—this morning, a gentleman, a *certain* gentleman, went into Tuppen's Library. Scarcely had he entered, when he heard another gentleman mention your name in a way not altogether respectful. This, the gentleman—that is to say, the *certain* gentleman—could not endure. He struck the other; a challenge ensued; within an hour afterwards they met on the Downs; exchanged shots; and the gentleman, your champion, was wounded."

"Wounded! who was it?" inquired Miss Bustle.

Now comes the trial, thought Damper.—"It is one," said he, "who takes the deepest interest in every thing that concerns you. In short—for the circumstances of the case compel me to speak out—he entertains for you the most unbounded affection; and, as you already possess his heart, he has authorised me to——"

Betsy Bustle fainted! Damper rang the bell violently. In a moment there was Mrs. Bustle, *sal-volatile*, Captain O'Popper, hartshorn, George Hobnill, burnt brown paper, and all the lodgers. In the midst of the confusion Gingerly (with a lackadaisical air, and his left arm in a sling) entered the room, and stood, unperceived, behind the crowd which was pressing about the fair fainter. Not a little delighted was he at the effect produced by this, his last, and most ingenious, expedient.

"Betsy, my child, what *is* the matter?" cried Mrs. Bustle.

"Betsy, my de*or*, what *is* the matter?" echoed George.

Either these sounds, or the burnt brown paper, or the hartshorn, or the *sal-volatile*, or, perhaps, the suffocating pressure of the persons about her—a circumstance inevitable on occasions of this nature—revived her. She opened her eyes; and the first object she beheld was George, kneeling at her side, and officiating as administerer of the burnt brown paper aforesaid. She burst into a flood of tears. As soon as she was sufficiently recovered to speak, she threw herself into his arms, and exclaimed: "Oh! George! how *could* you be so foolish as to expose your dear, your precious life, on my account? Had anything fatal happened to you I should have gone distracted! But whereabouts are you wounded!"

"Wounded!" exclaimed George, in utter amazement; "wounded! What an ide*or*! *Paw* my honour I——"

"Now don't deceive me, George; let me know the worst. But your endeavouring to conceal it from me is so like you! It is so *very* delicate. Oh! Mamma! after this, can you refuse to——?"

"I understand you, my dear child: you have my consent; and, with the consent of George's parents, the banns shall be published on Sunday."

"George," said the Captain, "I didn't think you had so much

in you. But you are a brave fellow: so, as to the consent, by the Powers! I say *ditto* to that. And, Mrs. Bustle," said he in a whisper to the lady; "as we are both in a consenting mood, let us consent to marry one another at the same time."

"Oh! Captain!" was the lady's laconic, but expressive, reply.

Gingerly, pale, and trembling from head to foot with rage and disappointment, was about to rush forward and explain; but he was restrained by an admonitory gesture from his friend.

"My dear Gingerly," said Damper, taking him aside; "remember your promise: the four o'clock coach and Lyon's Inn. Keep your own counsel: so shall you appear ridiculous in the eyes of none but of an old and trusty friend. Your ingenious contrivances, from first to last, have all turned to the advantage of your rival; nor have you the credit of being even suspected of the smallest of them. If you are resolved to marry, say '*Will you?*' to the first woman you may happen to meet; for, rely on it, at your time of life, you are not likely to entrap a female heart by DELICATE ATTENTIONS."

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# STEEPLE-HUNTING.

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ONE of those manias which from time to time run riot with "John Bull," and divert that worthy grumbler from the contemplation of his grievances, has recently attacked him, somewhat severely, in the guise of a steeple-chase. Vainly did the farmer swear, as he saw his freshly-ploughed fields torn up in all directions by a horde of the most reckless intruders;—idly did the grazier mourn over dismembered gates, scattered sheep, and shattered fences;—unheeded did the "little tenants" implore, and the "large tenants" threaten; the band of horsemen swept onward, and defied opposition. In some instances, the results have been sufficiently disastrous. One fat rector was rode over, and carried home lifeless on a shutter. Another elderly gentleman, who came on the field as a spectator, was elbowed into a deep ditch, where he lay for an hour, and, during that period, had the pleasure of seeing his five sons take their flying leaps over him. A maiden "gentlewoman, of considerable experience," who was tempted by the occasion to make her appearance at the Melton Mowbray steeple-chase, was driven, by the rush of riders, into a quickset hedge, whence, after forty minutes' struggle, she emerged with one shoe and three parts of a stocking, the crown and one string of her bonnet, the front breadth of her gown, and the tip of her boa—a melancholy and most instructive example of the "pursuit of *amusement* under difficulties!" She declared, with the most earnest and touching sincerity, as she regained the turf, that she was "pricked to the quick by her misfortunes." Alas! where was the ardour of Captain Prinsep—where the

well-known gallantry of Colonel Peel—that it did not bring them to the relief of a damsel so uneasily circumstanced?

But the practice is far more general than is at first supposed. There is a class of grave-looking gentlemen who go steeple-hunting all their days. Their uniform, as to coat and vest, is black; and their continuations invisible-green or Oxford-grey. They muster strong on field-days; and the ardour with which they lie on the scent is at once edifying and exemplary. Bishop P —— was indisputably a steeple-hunter when he wrote, first *against*, and then *for*, the Papists. The late Dr. G —— was a steeple-hunter of no common nerve when he handed over to the celebrated Mrs. Mary Anne Clarke two halves of two 500*l.* notes, to secure her influence in procuring him a vacant mitre. The learned minor canon who wrote, a year or two since, a ponderous quarto, entitled "Bishops the Bulwarks of the English Church," was clearly a steeple-hunter; and the renowed Mr. Gathercole, beneath whose lash the Dissenters rebel, and in the thunder of whose anathemas learned prelates (1) exult, belongs, incontrovertibly, to the same section of the sporting community.

Best of readers! *I* have also, in my time, been a steeple-hunter! With what success, you must judge.

For fourteen years of my life I belonged to the class now commonly known by the name of *meritorious curates*—that is to say, I had the sole charge of a parish of seven hundred souls, in which I had to maintain my position in society, dress like a gentleman, and relieve those whom all spurned but myself, upon the wages of a journeyman cabinet-maker. About eighteen months previous to the expiration of this period, owing to the death of two succeeding male heirs under age, the advowson of the living on which I was curate, the estate which surrounded it, and the noble woods which embosomed it, fell into the hands of an individual who, on his entering life, had as much chance of being opulent as I have of becoming an archdeacon. To the way in which he graced his honours no words, save his own, can do justice. On his succeeding to the estate, he found the parish engaged in the laborious and costly enterprise of enlarging, or rather rebuilding, the church, which for years had been a "church in

(1) See the Bishop of London's last Charge.

danger." A pew was forthwith demanded, of sufficient size to accommodate himself and his family. His request was at once attended to, and the matter considered arranged. A few weeks after, he called upon me in a perfect ferment, the perspiration standing on his brow, his eyes rolling, and every muscle in his face quivering. "Good heavens, my dear Sir! what sum do you think the parish churchwarden has charged me for my pew. I never heard of such extortion! Five pounds, as I 'm a living man!"

"Well, Sir, that does not appear to me unreasonable."

"Not unreasonable! Are you aware of what you're saying? Not unreasonable!"

"No; not for a pew capable of holding ten persons, near the reading-desk, and in the most preferable part of the church."

"What has that to do with it? I tell ye it's an extortionate demand. I've measured the whole pew three times over, and *there isn't forty shillings'-worth of timber in it!*"

The pew arranged, the next affair was the erection of a monument to his father, who had been gathered to his people upwards of half a century before. The 'Squire furnished both design and inscription. The former consisted of a very corpulent female figure weeping into a little tiny urn, which it was quite evident, from the *size of her tears*, she would very speedily fill. This was intended to represent Virtue inconsolable for the loss of Mr. Morehouse, sen.! An immense cherub at each corner blew a trumpet with all its might, out of which proceeded the words "Faith, Hope, Meekness, Charity." The verbiage was to this effect:—

"To Mr. Matthias Morehouse,
The best of Fathers and most upright of Underwriters,
This Monumental Tablet
is erected
by
His reverential and ever-afflicted Son,
Michael Morehouse, Esq.,
of
The Grange,
hard by."

On this monument the 'Squire used to fix his eyes, during service, with an expression of the most cordial complacency. His form seemed to dilate with satisfaction as he gazed on the little urn and the large lady. He prided himself on his Church of England principles, and his punctual performance of his Sabbath duties—and as he stood upright in his pew, and repeated the Belief in tones which the poor wheezy clerk tried in vain to drown, with his eyes shut, see-sawing himself upon his toes backwards and forwards, and closing each period with a solemn shake of his head—he was, as a whole, such an exhibition as is not often seen within the walls of a country church.

But the 'Squire, though deficient in taste, was not deficient in tongue; he abounded in civil speeches. We never met that he did not assure me of his zeal for my welfare, and of his wish to serve me; and so hearty and so repeated were his declarations of good-will, that I was fool enough to believe them sincere.

Matters stood thus when my rector died; and knowing the 'Squire had no son, brother, nephew, or cousin to whom a benefice of 160*l.* could be acceptable, I ventured one morning, after he had been more than commonly profuse in his professions, to put them to the test. In a sentence, I asked him for the vacant living. He shook me cordially by the hand, called up one of his blandest smiles, and began—

"My dear friend, I could not think of proposing anything so paltry to your acceptance. With your grasp of intellect and moral worth—don't allude to it—it is quite beneath you—quite unworthy of you."

"My expectations are very humble," was my reply; "allow me, therefore, to judge whether——"

"No, no! don't talk of it."

"I see many abler and better men worse off than myself; and the living, though small, would satisfy——"

"I cannot hear of it. My regard for you is such that——quite impossible—quite impossible."

"I understand you, Sir, and construe this last sentence into a refusal."

"Not exactly that; but—but—the living is gone! My butler asked and got it for some friend of his own. I believe the rascal

has sold it; but that's no affair of mine. Not a single shilling will find its way into *my* pocket. No, no! Wouldn't wound my conscience for all the gold of Ophir. But the bishop will provide for you. A man of your deserts and long services cannot be overlooked. You would be buried alive in this hamlet. No, no! Aspire to something better."

This was a complete check: my run for the season was ended. I did not attempt another steeple-hunt for some years; in fact, I almost came to a resolution to forswear the sport altogether, and only swerved from my determination under the following circumstances.

Upon the curacy to which I removed after this rebuff, I remained some years. My sporting days—as far, at least, as steeple-hunting was concerned—were past and over. Old men died, and young men succeeded them; but I instituted no inquiry—preferred no application—and persevered in the quiet discharge of my daily duties. Yet as age silvered my brow, and my family grew up around me, and the many cares and anxieties incident to their establishment in life pressed sorely upon me—with all my acquiescence in the maxim, "whatever *is*, is *right*," and all my trust in the awards of an inflexibly-just and unalterably-wise Providence, a feeling of melancholy foreboding for the future would occasionally come across me. This was insensibly deepened by the spectacle daily presented to me. My next neighbour was a clergyman residing on a large living. He had health—he had wealth—he had a small (and what is invaluable to a pastor), a peaceful and contented body of parishioners—good society within his reach, and a parsonage which, for its external advantages and internal embellishments, was a fairy palace—and he was wretched!

As I listened to his interminable complaints, a murmur—why should I not confess it?—would not unfrequently struggle for utterance. "Here is a man with all the elements of happiness within his reach—gifted with every capacity for enjoyment, insensible to the many blessings of his lot, while I—peace, busy Tempter, peace!"

But to his ailment. He was haunted by a perpetual fear of death. None of his family had survived their fortieth year; he

was fast approaching that period, and looked upon himself as a doomed man. Whenever this feeling came over him he was powerless. I have often been called to his assistance when the bells for his church-service were ringing—when a corpse was on its way to his burial-ground for interment—when a couple have been standing at the altar impatiently waiting his arrival: no argument, no raillery could rouse him. His house-keeper recommended Dr. Jephson and Leamington Spa; I prescribed abstinence and exercise. He talked of Abernethy and blue pill; I said, "Drink less wine, and lay down your carriage!"

Neither alternative was adopted. He sent for the village doctor, who for some weeks dosed him *ad libitum*. Debilitated by drugs and fright, the rector sunk so rapidly that his country attendant became alarmed, and wished for another opinion. A physician was called in; the sight of this grave-looking personage at his bed-side so thoroughly convinced the patient his hours were numbered, that his nervous excitement became so violent, and his symptoms so aggravated, that Dr. W. deemed "the case a very peculiar one," and begged for a consultation. A second physician was summoned. "They may muffle the bells as soon as they like for master's funeral-peal," said the clerk, when this fact was made known to him. "*What man on e'rth was ever known to hold it out agen* THREE *doctors?*"

Amen was right: within a fortnight after the arrival of the consulting physician, Mr. Edmonstone was quietly sleeping beneath the turf of his own churchyard!

Who was to be his successor? The living was large, and the question was fiercely debated; and while each village quidnunc pretended to be wiser than his brother gossip, and not one of the fraternity could possess any accurate information on the point, I went on quietly taking the duty. The question of patronage was in this instance interesting; it was vested in three maiden ladies of eccentric views and vagabond habits. They were rarely unanimous on any subject; and on the last vacancy were so long in making up their minds on the merits of "a mere moral preacher," whom the elder Miss Hebblethwaite patronised—of "a true Gospel trumpet," whom the youngest sister admired—and of "a man of moderate views," whom the second sister

preferred, but who was scouted by the other two as "that worst of characters, a Borderer," that the six months allowed them for presentation expired. The living lapsed to the bishop, and his lordship very quietly instituted a near relative of his own. Many, therefore, and various, were the speculations which the present vacancy occasioned. The sisters were cursed with a hatred of repose—they lived only in locomotion; "*Onward*" was the motto of their lives. The grave, as a place of rest, must have been inconceivably odious to them; and Mrs. Hemans' beautiful thoughts on "The Calm of Life," utterly unintelligible. For months their movements were unknown even to their lawyer and agent. Now they were at Boulogne—now at Buxton—now at Versailles—and soon afterwards at Bowness. Their steward was only apprised of their existence by their applications to him for money, which he was always ordered to remit "by return of post." The last time they were heard of was at Milan; and if their next letters had been dated from Aleppo, it would have caused no feeling of surprise among the circle of their dependents.

Meanwhile, week after week rolled away without bringing any tidings of the new rector. Three months had expired; still we were without the slightest intimation of the Miss Hebblethwaite's intentions. The fourth month had nearly closed, when two young gentlemen came down and made surprisingly-minute inquiries about the *temporalities* of the benefice. One was said to be the diocesan's grandson, and the other the Miss Hebblethwaite's heir-at-law; but, to the infinite mortification of Mrs. Dalby, the leading gossip of the village, nothing positive could be elicited respecting either. The fifth month wore away, and both the lawyer and the steward became uneasy in right earnest.

"How mortifying," said the first, "that this noble living should again fall into the hands of the Bishop! and yet I see no means of preventing it. Were I not sure they would view it as an unpardonable offence, and discard me for ever from their confidence, I would advertise the ladies in all the public papers, as the only means of discovering their domicile."

The lamentations of the steward were in a different strain, but quite as characteristic.

"A very pretty piece of business, upon my word! This comes

of women being entrusted with landed property! This comes of going to foreign parts—frenchifying and frog-eating—instead of residing at your own hall, among your own tenantry! A thousand a-year to go to some one of Bishop Tomline's offsets! O Lord! O Lord! It 's well the old squire's dead and gone! He that was always so precise and business-like in all he said and did—it's enough to make him turn in his coffin! It's well, indeed, if I don't go crazed myself! And God only knows whom the Bishop may choose to send us; some young chap, perhaps, who will be for raising the tithe, and changing the tenants, and worrying the ladies out of their wits when they return—that is to say, if they ever *do* return; or can have the face to return after playing up a second time a vagary of this sort. But what rational act did you ever hear devised by the joint-stock brains of three maiden ladies?"

The sixth month began, and was within five days of its close, when the steward burst into my little study at an early hour one morning with an old, dirty, crumpled newspaper in his hand—"They're found—they're found—be stirring, my dear Sir, be stirring — the Miss Hebblethwaites are in England—are at Cheltenham! Look here!" and, unfolding a greasy and well-thumbed number of the "Bath Chronicle," he pointed with his fat finger to a paragraph, headed "ARRIVALS.—*The Miss Hebblethwaites, at Montpellier House, from the Continent.*" "Lose not an hour; see them at once, and secure the living for yourself; here's a letter of introduction from Lawyer Barkbite; here's another from me; here's money, and a chaise at the door. Take the paper with ye; fee the boys well, and they'll drive like mad. Follow up the scent; push forward, and you'll save the living from the old cormorant at Farnham."

While my wife and children were crowding around, one dressing me, another feeding me, a third packing my valise, and all doing their utmost to expedite my departure, the lawyer arrived. With a greater appearance of interest than I had ever seen him evince on any former occasion, he put a packet into my hand, and said, "This will save time, and obviate all needless delay. You will find here the presentation drawn out in form upon a proper stamp, and requiring only dates and signatures. Now,"

continued he, drawing me aside, and dropping his voice to a whisper, "these are eccentric women, and have never yet acted in any one single instance like the rest of the world. One never knows what may be the ruling whim of the moment; they have an insurmountable aversion to business, and it is not at all impossible that they may deny their right of patronage—or affect to disbelieve the fact of Edmonstone's death—or require further evidence on the point—or perpetrate some folly or other, in order to get rid of the trouble of presenting. Don't therefore be discouraged at the first refusal; press them hard; go over the ground again and again. The proverb, though musty, is true, "Faint heart"—you know the sequel? Above all——"

"Be off," said the steward impatiently, "and prosper. You'll break my heart"—and as he spoke the tears actually made their appearance on his rough honest face—"if you don't succeed. But you *must* succeed, and you *shall* succeed, and I shall see you Ma'am," said he, turning to my wife, "in the rectory-house yet; and now break cover!" And actually, pushing me into the chaise, he shut the door with an air of the most ruthless determination, gave the word to the drivers, and sent me, for the second time in my life—STEEPLE-HUNTING!

I reached Cheltenham late on the evening of the second day. Those were the times of ignorance! There was no "Age," no "Criterion," no "Quicksilver," to hurry his Majesty's lieges to that stage whence "no traveller returns." Ann Nelson was in her teens; and Jem Stevenson in his cradle. Steam and railroads were unknown—and the most impatient mortals were compelled to put up with a pace somewhat under six miles an hour. Anxious and agitated, I stood before Montpellier House at nine the following morning; no ladies of the name of Hebblethwaite were to be found there, and the day was half spent, when, by dint of bribery, I was able to ascertain that the fair ones I was in search of had quitted Cheltenham, the week previous, for Bath.

For Bath, in a perfect fever of anxiety, I took the first coach; and at every milestone which we passed did I congratulate myself that I was so much nearer my destination; when midway between Bath and Gloucester I heard a shriek from a female pas-

senger—a crush ensued—a shock, and glass flew about in all directions. The coach was overturned! My "escape," I was given to understand, was "wonderful, under all the circumstances!" That is to say, I left the coach with a gash across my lip, another across my brow, and half-a-dozen severe bruises: nor did the evil end here. From the delay and confusion, crimination and recrimination, peculiar to such incidents, we did not reach Bath till midnight. Another of the very few days I had to spare had lapsed irretrievably and uselessly!

I rose early the next morning, aching in every limb, and, after a long and weary round of inquiries, discovered the house which contained the objects of my search. I rang at the door and sent up my card; a starched and most forbidding-looking Abigail chilled my very soul with a reply—"The Miss Hebblethwaites see no stranger; it is contrary to their rule."

"But," said I, slipping a guinea into the severe-looking lady's palm, which closed on it without a muscle of her face moving—"I am only in name a stranger; I come from that part of the country where the Miss Hebblethwaites' property is situated, and my errand is of importance to them as well as myself."

"I will see what can be done," said the frowning duenna. "Meanwhile, I cannot admit you into the house; you must wait without."

In about twenty minutes she returned. "Does your errand relate to any matter of business?"

"It does."

"Is it of pressing importance?"

"It is."

"Does it affect only one, or all the ladies?"

"One and all."

"They will see you then in an hour from this time." And, without waiting for one word of dissent or acquiescence, the door was slammed in my face.

I was punctual to a second in my appointment; and should have been rather before it, but for a score of men who worried me with questions, and were in search of a poor lunatic who had st escaped from a neighbouring asylum. The same austere-looking damsel answered my summons, and preceded me into a

large comfortless-looking room. In a few seconds, steps were heard along the passage; the door opened, and the Miss Hebblethwaites made their appearance. They advanced with considerable caution, and sat themselves down in a row; the eldest sister, who came first, had a tendency to obesity, and was evidently not averse to good eating. The second advanced, in a dress so singular and studiously plain, that it was clear she saw sin in a gay riband, and depravity in the trimmings of a cap;—she was the devotee. The youngest was attired with that attention to fashion which proved she by no means thought her day over, and had not made up her mind to celibacy;—this was the belle. They each dropped a formal curtsey; then, pointing to a chair, the eldest sister "begged I would explain my business."

"I have ventured to call on you," I began, in somewhat tremulous tones, "with reference to the vacant living of Fallowfield; but this letter will best explain my errand—" and I pulled out the lawyer's missive, and tendered it to the elder lady's acceptance. She took it with an air of reserve, turned it over and over, and was evidently by no means anxious to become acquainted with its contents.

"Who is the writer?" she at length demanded.

"Your man of business, Mr. Barkbite."

"Never heard of such a person," said the gourmand, firmly.

"Never in my days," said the devotee with a solemn air, and crossing her hands demurely over her lavender silk dress.

"Never! never!" echoed the flirt, in a sharp brisk tone.

"This is strange," I continued; "but here is another letter, the hand-writing of which you will immediately recognise—that of Mr. Heavisides."

"And who is he?" cried the stout lady.

"Who is he! No other than your steward."

"Oh dear, how dreadful!" said the elder female, more to her sisters than to me; and the three began to converse in a low ominous whisper.

Feeling no time was to be lost, I recommenced my suit by saying—"I arrived in Bath only last night, having sought you in vain at Cheltenham; we were only aware of your having returned from the Continent——"

"The Continent!" said the belle, opening her eyes wide, in uncontrollable amazement—"We never were out of England in our lives!"

Well might Mr. Barkbite call you eccentric, I thought; but, however, my point is to make you sign, and that point, *coûte qu'il coûte*, I must carry.

"I assure you that Mr. Edmonstone is dead. Here is the certificate of his burial; there is very little time for deliberation, the living is on the very point of lapsing to the bishop; and, as curate——"

"Poor creature!" said the gourmande, compassionately; "he fancies himself a clergyman." And as she uttered this aside, she fixed her eyes on me with the most sceptical expression. Heat and dust, and anxiety, and want of sleep—to say nothing of my gashes and bruises—rendered my appearance unclerical enough, to be sure.

"What do you wish me to do?" said the fat lady, at length, with a perplexed air.

"Sign, sign," said I, producing the presentation, and tendering a pen.

"Do nothing of the kind," interrupted the devotee, very warmly. "You don't know who he is; remember the wickedness of the world, and the wiles of Satan. You may be signing away your maintenance."

"Good man!" said the flirt, coming up to the rescue of her elder sister, "we have no living. We never had; were one ours you should have it at once. Will that satisfy you?"

"To satisfy me," said I, still tendering the pen and presentation, "you must sign."

Again they whispered among themselves; and, seeing the fat lady feeling for her feet, and being convinced they contemplated making a move, prior to attempting their escape, I got between them and the door, and uttered—"I merely want your signature. I shall just have time to get to Farnham; be considerate, be generous; think of my large family, long services, and narrow means. By one act of yours you can change the latter into independence, into affluence. I entreat—I implore you to sign!"

"Let me look at the paper," said the eldest lady, somewhat softened.

"You shan't touch it," said the devotee, interposing. "Would you reduce us all to the state of a common pauper?"

"It cannot have that effect—you have no relation who can hold the living; no nephew, no brother."

"No brother!" cried the flirt, in amaze. "What's the man talking about! We had five alive and well this morning! My worthy man," continued she, dropping her voice, and speaking in a soft, coaxing, wheedling tone, "you are labouring under some gross and grievous error—indeed you are! Believe me, you are under the influence of some unaccountable mistake."

"Rather, of some awful, fearful, dreadful delusion!" growled the devotee, sternly.

"Only sign!" cried I, sticking to my purpose, "I ask no more. Oh! if you only knew the house of doubt, of suspense, of misery, from which I have just made my escape!"

"Ah! sister," screamed the flirt, "you're right. I see it now; what *will* become of us? Help! Help! A madman! Murder! Help! Help! Help!"

The trio here screamed in concert; the door flew open; and, before I had the power of giving any explanation, I was apprehended as the gentleman who had just made his escape from Dr. Drinkwater's establishment.

Hours elapsed before I could establish my own identity, or obtain permission to depart. When that was given, freedom was comparatively immaterial. Whether the ladies were the real or false Miss Hebblethwaites—whether their conduct was the result of eccentricity or fright, availed but little. The time allowed for presentation had expired. The living was no longer within their control. It had lapsed, beyond remedy, to the Bishop.

And in the interim, what turn had affairs taken at Fallowfield? —A very droll one. About two o'clock in the day succeeding my departure, the Miss Hebblethwaites returned to the Hall from Nice, where they had been residing for the last six months! They brought with them a young man of very fashionable exterior, with a fine commanding figure; and, as far as his carefully-cultivated whiskers would allow one to judge, of handsome fea-

tures. Him the eldest sister at once announced as the Rector of Fallowfield—and HER HUSBAND! She was fifty-three, and he was barely twenty-five; but of course it was a match of pure affection! No baser motive could possibly have influenced it. Disinterestedness was apparent throughout. Her gouty legs and ponderous frame had, no doubt, enchained her young husband's affections; and he had wheeled her to the altar in utter ignorance of the fact that she had a vacant living of one thousand a-year, at that moment, at her disposal. She spoke—for these old women, when they marry young boys, are surprisingly eloquent—loudly and largely as to his many estimable qualities; declared that he was "a most single-minded and simple-hearted being;" that "none but those who knew him intimately were aware of his worth;" that "in devotion to his duties he was another Henry Martyn; and in all respects A MOST DETERMINED CHARACTER."

This last assertion nobody was inclined to question, seeing he had married a woman nearly old enough to be his grandmother!

He preached, and read himself in, on the following Sunday. His delighted bride averred that "he had the vigour of Channing, and the imagery of Chalmers;" and all the parish admittted him to be a most *promising* young man! Whether the promise will ever bear fruit is still to be decided; for this was his first and last ministerial effort in Fallowfield Church. On the Tuesday following, the quartet ordered their travelling-carriage, and again resumed their wanderings; on which, for anything that is known to the contrary, they are still engaged.

Again a change was necessary, and I became curate to the honourable and reverend Mr. H., the brother of Lord F. He was a beautiful instance of a dignified yet active clergyman, around whose declining years were gathered the affections of the good, and the respect even of the vicious; and who was silently, yet incessantly, carrying on his preparation for the solemnities of another scene. His aristocratic feelings, which were adventitious to his birth and position, were curiously tempered by his innate benevolence and kindness of disposition. No change—no deviation—no departure from the established order of parochial duty, *as he had laid it down*, was permitted, without previously receiving his approval and personal sanction. He exacted from his

colleague that deference which he thought their relative position entitled the one to receive, and called upon the other to give; and which no stipendiary of sense and reflection will ever withhold. And while this rule of discipline he never relaxed, he was still the kindest and most considerate of incumbents. A gentleman himself, he was most cautious of wounding in the slightest manner the feelings of another; and whatever arrangement could conduce to your comfort or enjoyment, was sure to be espied out and *ordered* by him long, long before it had occurred to yourself.

His health, which was impaired when our connexion first commenced, gradually gave way beneath the inroads of old age; and, after three years of harmony and comfort, I could no longer disguise from myself the prospect of my becoming again a wanderer.

"Come to me," said he, "every other day and read to me. *Every* day I should like to see you; but *every other day* I cannot do without you."

I felt a delicacy in obeying his repeated summons; for I feared my attentions might be misconstrued; and the past had taught me a bitter lesson. The "ruling passion strong even in death!" —he evidently expected, and even waited for some application on my part.

"Are you aware that my brother, Lord F——, is the patron of this living?" said he one morning, when he appeared more than usually conscious of his progress towards dissolution. "I am," was my reply, and took my leave. The Baron came to see him that evening; and so great was the affection subsisting between the brothers, that I was again and again assured by those about him that any request from the dying clergyman the peer would hold sacred; and that I had but to name my wish of succeeding to the living, in order to obtain it. But no! my last STEEPLE-CHASE was fresh in my recollection; and I resolved, "thro' weal, thro' woe," to abide by the resolution I then formed —never again to be a suitor for preferment to any human being.

The invalid rallied unexpectedly on the following morning, and detained me by his bed-side reading and talking to him for a longer period than usual. At length I rose to take my leave.

"Have you any request to make?" said he, in his usual manner—a mixture of kindness and reserve.

"None," said I, firmly.

"Your position here will be insecure when I am called away."

"I am aware of it."

"And the future—have you made any provision, any arrangement respecting it?"

"None whatever."

"And your wife and family—what do you propose respecting them?"

"To leave them and the future to the goodness and mercy of God."

It was thus we parted, and for ever! He died the following morning, and was buried amid the tears and lamentations of a bereaved people.

Weeks rolled away, but the applications to Lord F. for the vacant living poured in from all quarters. Persons whom he had never before heard of called upon him; others, from the most distant parts of the country, wrote to him; visit and letter alike tending to the same point—preferment. His Lordship was a model of polite endurance. He received all—answered all—and promised no one. Meanwhile our preparations for departure were proceeding; and in almost every letter I opened, I expected to find the usual polite intimation that my "services were no longer requisite"—in other words, *a notice to quit.*

Six or eight weeks passed on in this uncomfortable manner, when, late on one Saturday evening, Lord F. surprised me over my sermon.

"I have called on you, Mr. ——, to tell you that I have at length made up my mind on the subject of the living. I shall give it away forthwith. I mention this, because I conceive your movements to depend, in some measure, on mine."

"They do, my Lord."

"The gentleman whom I intend to present to Rivermede will not require assistance; and I fear, therefore, that your services here, as curate, will unavoidably terminate."

"This contingency, my Lord, I have expected; and am prepared to meet it."

"You have expected it, you say? Pray where do you intend to go?"

"Where God may please to send me."

"And have you no curacy in prospect?"

"None, my Lord."

"Then you had better remain where you are: and that you may do so in comfort, here is the presentation to the living." "Now," continued he, thus kindly giving me time to recover from my surprise, "I benefice you, not because you are a man of character, and stand well with your parish, for in these respects you are only on an equality with some three score *angelic* clergymen—egad! they merit bishoprics, not rectories!—whose pretensions have been submitted to me within the last six weeks—but I select you because you are no preferment-hunter; and because, amid many that might be supposed to have some claim upon my notice, you alone have had the delicacy to abstain from all solicitation. Every happiness attend ye! and now, good night."

Rivermede Rectory then was mine! And here, most indulgent of readers, is your happy and grateful babbler wearing away the brief remnant of his days!

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# THE VANDERLINS.

## A STORY OF THE EARLY EMIGRANTS.

EARLY in the las century, Jacob Vanderlin, a Dutchman, and others of his countrymen, equally wealthy, chartered the good ship Palatine, at Hamburgh, to convey themselves, their families, and effects, to Pennsylvania. There were in all thirty persons, one-half of whom were females. Those were the days of the Buccaneers, and the name of Kidd was the terror of all who had business on the great deep. Vanderlin and his colleagues had, therefore, been careful to procure a well-armed ship, and had enjoined upon Captain Horner to engage a faithful and effective crew. In a few days the captain informed them that all was ready. His first and second officers were, indeed, strangers to him, but they had come recommended by the first commercial house in Amsterdam; his third was young Reynolds, an Englishman, and his own adopted son. His crew, picked men, selected by his mates from every maritime nation in Europe, were thirty-five strong sea-dogs, every man among them a match for Kidd himself.

Encouraged by this flattering account, the conclusion of which, at least, was true, but not in the sense that the captain intended, they at length set sail, and Mary Vanderlin saw through her tears the low verdant shores of the Netherlands, for the first and last time, sink behind the waters. Mary was one of the fairest flowers that grew on the banks of the Elbe, and never could have survived this removal from her native soil, but for the presence of those whose smile was her sun. Her father and mother were

with her, and one other, with whom she would have been content to bloom and blush unseen in a desert. This was young Reynolds, the son of an English merchant, and nephew of Horner. Left independent by his father, he had made several voyages with his uncle, rather to gratify his love of roving than from any pecuniary necessity, or to learn the science of navigation. He had for some time known Mary Vanderlin, and worshipped her at a distance, as a being worthy of his most affectionate regards. Having converted a part of his estate into money, and obtained from his uncle the berth which he held on board the Palatine, he was now following the star of his destiny to the western world.

We pass over an interval of five weeks, and present to our readers the Palatine becalmed in the middle of the Atlantic. There seemed something unnatural in that calm. The winds had stopped, twelve days before, as if strangled—the sea became motionless, as if frozen to the bottom. The burning August sun had wheeled, day after day, over a hard arid sky, and set, without a vapour on the horizontal air, to soften the intensity of his beams, or to adorn the twilight. Silence and immensity, a liquid Sahara, and their ship chained in the midst of it, were all that fell upon the senses of our hapless voyagers.

It was the twelfth day of the calm. The sun was dropping towards the sea, as to his grave. A large group was collected on the Palatine's deck. A melancholy change had passed upon them. Five weeks before, their faces were as bright as health and hope could make them, and they had left their port amid cheers and salutes. Now they were pale and emaciated. A great part of their provisions had, in some unaccountable way, become spoiled—a malignant fever was in the cabin and steerage, and they were now met at a funeral. The disease, which was of the most virulent type, had not yet reached those parts of the ship inhabited by the sailors, and the bluff tars stood looking on with a grim indifference, that contrasted strangely with the saddened looks of the passengers. Vanderlin was there with the fever spot upon his cheek, and on his arm leaned his daughter, looking him in the face like the spirit of health; for, hitherto, she had walked amid the pestilence, like an angel of light, untouched and scatheless. The mournful rite proceeded; the last

deep prayer was said, and the body of the veteran commander of the Palatine glided into the depths of the sea. Wide waving circles moved upon the glassy waters, and soon seemed to call up an answering and counter ripple from the eastern bound of the horizon.

"Square the yards!" shouted a harsh voice; "our Jonah's gone at last, and here comes a breeze." The passengers turned with indignation and amazement at this unfeeling speech. Their eyes met the demoniacal glance of Mark Dusenbach, late first officer, now master, of the Palatine. His square brawny form was planted on the quarter-deck, and his orders were delivered with clearness and authority, while the sailors braced round the yards, and gave to the breeze the full volume of the sail. The passengers felt that they, as well as the ship, had a new master; and, quailing before glances which they could neither understand nor brook, they retired, each to his place, in the cabin or steerage.

Well had Captain Horner said that his first officer was a match for Kidd himself: he was a genius in wickedness. He had sailed under Kidd till the common atrocities of piracy had palled upon his appetite; and he left the service, determined to do something refined and original. He entered the merchant service in Holland, and, being an accomplished seaman, was soon able to procure the credentials that gained him his place on board the Palatine. He had heard of the proposed emigration, and the fiend of his heart had whispered that now at last was the golden opportunity to give scope to his genius, and gather laurels on an untried field. The second mate was a creature of his own, and the crew, whom he as chief mate had enlisted, were indeed *picked* men. Already he and his myrmidons had produced the deadly disease on board, which he calculated would soon carry off, without violence, the whole of the passengers. In the death of Horner, the only obstacle to his operations was removed. Triumph swelled his form as he strode the quarter-deck. He beckoned to him Dunscomb, his second in command. "'T is an ill wind that blows nobody any good," remarked the piratical villain. "Wind!" said Dunscomb, "never talk of wind after such a beautiful calm. It has been better for our purpose than all the

industry we could have used. Only think that old Horner should have been the first to take the fever." "So much the better, Mr. Dunscomb," said the captain; "are the men *ripe*?" "Dead ripe!" said Dunscomb. "But Reynolds?" "Oh, he is dead ripe also. He laughed and jumped with delight when I let him a leetle into the plot of our comedy." "Tragedy you mean—but never mind, it's all one. I am glad Reynolds is to join us. He is clever, and may be useful. But take care of the rest, and I have no doubt they will all be done for in a few days." Such was the discourse that passed between these two accomplished wretches, who were dead to every tender feeling, and savagely contemplated the speedy extinction of the ill-fated passengers and proprietors of the vessel and cargo. It is here necessary to explain, that young Reynolds had, from motives of policy, appeared to assent to the designs of Dunscomb, and resolved to watch an opportunity of rescuing Mary Vanderlin and her friends from the death which awaited them.

For six days more did the ship beat up and down the New England seas, daily committing to the waves some two or three of the unhappy victims, till there were not more than six or eight half-famished wretches left, most of whom were deeply tainted with disease. Sometimes when they were allowed to come on deck to witness the sea burial of a companion, they would catch a glimpse of the blue land of promise, and they would weep and wring their hands, and, in the most piteous accents, entreat to be set on shore. But Dusenbach was not yet ready to go into port.

Vanderlin lay in his berth, clasping the hands of his wife and child. "You are sick—you are dying," said he, tenderly; "let the wretches have all, so they will save us."

"Never!" said his high-spirited wife; "they shall have my life first!" "And father's, mother?" said Mary, in an agony of tears. Madame Vanderlin's lip quivered, but she answered firmly, "What will it avail, my husband! They must and will have our lives. It is necessary to their safety, and this they knew when they commenced their horrid system. The ministering angel whose care has thus far kept life in us, has told us that nothing short of a miracle can save us: some of the crew have taken

the fever; they must go into port soon; they cannot take us with them. Soon, therefore, disease, or their knives, must end us!" "You say truly," said the mournful voice of Reynolds, who at that moment softly entered the cabin; "but," and he knelt beside Mary, and clasped her passionately to his heart, "living or dying, we will go hence together."

That very day, at evening, the body of Vanderlin was committed to the waves. His wife took his place in the sick berth. Then it was that Mary's fortitude forsook her. "Oh, to be left alone!" was her bitter cry. Again her guardian angel was at her side, and repeated his vow to die with her. She wept upon his faithful bosom, and for a moment was relieved. But suddenly she raised her head wildly. "You die!" she exclaimed; "surely, surely, you can escape." "Alas! dear Mary, I am not the ruffian I am forced to appear on deck. Let us hope that some favourable circumstance will occur to release us from this frightful charnel-house. At any rate, we shall not be separated."

Want and disease had now reached the crew, and they began to murmur. There still existed in the cabin two witnesses of their atrocities, and in the steerage six. Dusenbach pondered long and deeply upon the shedding of blood, and the glances of his malignant eye became hourly more baleful. But a power was gathering in the air to hasten the consummation of his crimes, and to work an appalling change in the aspect of our narrative.

The vessel, which had been wilfully kept sailing to and fro on wrong tacks, was now approaching the shores of Block Island, a small sterile piece of land near the coast of New England, about twenty miles south-east of Philadelphia. This poor little island was at this period inhabited by a few families who ostensibly lived by fishing, but whose principal occupation was decoying vessels on shore during storms, and afterwards plundering them of their contents.

"'T will be a miracle if this northeaster don't bring us a windfall," said John Dory, one of the ringleaders of the wreckers, to a party of hard-looking fellows on the outermost beach of Block Island, looking out upon the sea, which maddened and drove to the shore with a violence rarely witnessed even on that weather-

beaten coast. It grew darker and darker, and the party, with discontented looks, were retiring, when a distant heavy sound came floating with the blended mist and spray down on the fierce northeaster. They stopped with ears erect. Again and again it came, booming heavily on the night wind. "'T is a signal of distress!" cried John Dory; "now three to the lights and three to my pilot-boat!" In a few minutes three fires were lighted at as many different points, and a boat, with John on board to act as pilot for the vessel, was seen stealing out of the little harbour into the thick darkness of the ocean. The signal guns continued to be heard at intervals for several hours, as the ship neared the coast.

"Are you sure of your bearings, pilot?" shouted the anxious voice of Dusenbach, through the din of the tempest. "Ay, ay, sir!" said the voice of John Dory out of the top of his huge jacket; "the larboard light and the further light bear dead upon the reef." "Keep her away, then," cried the excited captain. "And the starboard light and the further light in a line brings us into smooth water and soft bottom. A leetle more—luff now, luff! So—steady."

But a broad phosphorescent glare now appeared on their weather-bow, towards which the ship, bowed low with her side to the wind, was furiously dashing. "Pilot, are you sure, very sure?" cried the almost distracted captain of the Palatine. "Very sure, sir. The starboard light——" "Confound your lights, sir. What is that there forward? Don't I see—don't I hear breakers? Keep her away!" he shouted with all the might of his lungs; "away with her—away!" and he sprang to the helm himself, and put it hard up. The ship made a rapid sweep, and once more darted off before the wind. The next moment she stopped with a shock that made her quiver in every timber, and nearly sent the masts by the board. "She 's struck!" screamed the captain, grinding his teeth with madness. "Rig a noose in the main-top-gallant halyards, and run up this scoundrelly pilot, who has led us to destruction."

"Look you, master captain," said Dory, very calmly, "you may save yourself the trouble. Do you think me such a fool as to come out in a night like this for the mere honour of being

shipwrecked in your company?" "A'n't there the reef?" said the bewildered captain, "and wa'nt you steering the ship dead upon it?" "To be sure it is—to be sure I was. The channel lies close under the lee of the rocks—it a'n't wider than an Indian track—but I can make a ship walk it the darkest night that ever fell. But you drove the pilot from the helm, and here we are." "Where?" cried Dusenbach. "Why, dead in a sand-bank, inside the Horse-Shoe reef."

Day was now slowly breaking, and soon showed them their real situation. Within a short mile under their lee the shore was dimly discernible through the mist, and, upon it, numerous figures of men, whom expectation, arising from their confidence in Dory's *pilotage*, had kept waiting on the beach all night. The ship was stranded on a sand-bank within a semi-circular reef, and hardly a cable's length to leeward of the breakers. She was thus tolerably well defended from the assaults of the sea, save when some gigantic breaker acquired headway sufficient to overleap the barrier of rocks, and to pitch headlong on her deck and sides. This soon became frequent. The wind rose with the sun, and there raged a furious gale. Wave after wave dashed upon the devoted ship with the force of cataracts. All her boats were swept away—not one could come off from the island, and even John Dory began to cast anxious glances landward. "How long will she last, think you, pilot?" said Dusenbach. "Why, I have known a ship thumped to pieces a little farther out in about four hours."

But the Palatine stood it wonderfully. The clank of the pump-brake was, indeed, heard incessantly, and she seemed settling still deeper into the sands; the "four hours" had expired, and the storm was gradually abating. At length the sun set, and the tempest, as if its errand were accomplished, gathered up its clouds, and vanished. A brisk south-wester sprang up, and several boats from the island came alongside.

Released from the absorbing and imminent dangers of the last twenty-four hours, Dusenbach's mind had now leisure to return to its former plans and fears. The bows were badly stove; the ship must be abandoned that very night; if left standing, the islanders must needs come on board, and there were yet eight

tongues to publish the foulest crime ever committed on land or sea. He took his resolution—a resolve sufficiently horrid. He determined, after removing the valuables out of the ship, to burn her, and, with her, the eight living witnesses of his atrocities. He communicated this to Dunscomb and Reynolds. Although Reynolds was convinced that Dory had purposely cast the ship away, and, consequently, distrusted him exceedingly, yet he could not let this only opportunity of reaping the reward of his painful and masterly dissimulation, and of saving a life far dearer than his own, pass unimproved. He had, therefore, very cautiously informed him of the real character of Dusenbach and his crew, and the dreadful fate that awaited the passengers. Dory, half freebooter as he was, was astounded at the information.

"Whew!" said he, "but this beats all nater. I am glad of it, for I thought we were going to be a little *too* bad!" A hurried consultation then took place between them. It was now quite dark, and the boats were ready to put off. "I will leave my boat under the ship's stern, captain," said Dory; "from the look of her bows, you may have need of one before we return."

Twenty of the crew now went on shore in the boats to protect the property, and Reynolds was sent forward to examine the bows. He went reluctantly, for he felt that the crisis of his fate was at hand.

Dusenbach strode the deck with a hurried step and a gloomy brow. A new thought was cast up in his storm-tossed soul. "Better make all snug at once," said he, mentally; and he beckoned to him three grim-looking fellows, and gave them some order in a whisper. Two of them entered the steerage—need it be told for what purpose? The work of death was speedily accomplished. The third assassin proceeded to the cabin, where Mary Vanderlin and her mother alone remained alive, though in a state of extreme weakness from the effects of the storm and anxiety of mind. By the light of a solitary lamp, Mary was seen kneeling by her sick mother in the attitude of prayer. Her eyes met the assassin's as he entered, and, charmed by their basilisk influence, remained fixed on him in mute horror. He paused—he attempted to approach; still her eye followed his. The wretch

was paralysed, and he could not execute his deadly purpose. At length he turned abruptly, and fled to a distant part of the vessel. At this moment Reynolds was returning from the fore part of the ship. He saw the cabin-door open, and a figure emerge and quickly disappear, armed with a knife. Despair shot through his brain and heart; but the next instant he darted like lightning down the steps into the cabin. Mary was lying apparently lifeless, but without external injury.

"Mary—dearest—mine in life and death," cried he, passionately, lifting her in his arms, "be yourself now." "I am prepared to die," said Mary, opening her eyes. "But life, Mary! for life now, dearest!" cried he, bearing her towards the cabin window. With a hurried hand he removed the dead-light, and the broad face of John Dory appeared at the window.

"Softly, lad; quick, and softly!" said he, receiving from Reynolds his burden, and carefully laying her down in the boat. In about a minute more, Madame Vanderline and Reynolds were safely on board, the fastening loosed, and the boat suffered to drift clear of the ship. The sails were then hoisted, and she was put upon the wind towards the shore. What language can do justice to the feelings of the mother and child, when the waking certainty, the blessed reality of this wonderful escape, came home full upon their hearts—an escape from such horrors! They wept, they prayed, they poured out their warm and grateful feelings to their deliverer Dory.

"Well, ma'am, well," said Dory, "it was 'cutely done, that 's certain—almost as well as my piloting last night; and I hope 't will go somewhat towards balancing a heavy score I have been running up on the wrong side of the great account-book, and to which I fear there will be some items added before morning."

"Well, Captain Reynolds," continued Dory, as they rapidly neared the shore, "here are your trunks, you see, and some of madam's, I suppose, from the 'nitials; I was careful to have them stowed in *my* boat, to which, as they were putting off, I slily added myself. And now I 'm thinking you had better not land on the island at all. Block Islanders are wreckers, and there are things to be done yet, to which we don't want to have any 'long-shore witnesses." "But Dusenbach, what is to be

done with him?" said Reynolds. "Leave him to John Dory and a Block Island court-martial," said the islander; "his punishment shall be seen from here to Nantucket. But here we are, near the point. If you leave the boat at Tucker's wharf, at Newport, I shall get her again; so good by. Here's a smooth sea, fair breeze, and bright starlight, and yonder 's Sekonnet light."

Early the next morning the boat entered Newport harbour. The little party, the sole survivors out of all the passengers of the Palatine, tarried in that place till the health of Madame Vanderlin was entirely restored. The hands of Reynolds and his Mary were then united in the bonds of wedlock; and then, as if anxious to remove as far as possible from the sea, associated as it was with such dreadful recollections, they retired far west, into the interior of Pennsylvania, and purchased a tract of land, on which their numerous descendants still live.

Return we to the Palatine. It was "deep midnight." So busy had been the crew and islanders, that almost every thing of value was already on shore. Three boats, however, were still alongside, and fifteen of the crew still on board. Of these, five were sick *down forward*, six were still rummaging the hold for valuables, and four were at the halyards, ready to hoist up whatever they might find. John Dory and six or eight Block Islanders were lounging lazily near the main hatch, and none of them, except Dory, seemed to take any interest in what was going forward. He, ever and anon, approached and looked down the hatchway. Dusenbach superintended the whole in person.

"What have they got hold of now?" at length said Dory. All hands clustered round the hatchway, and stood looking down into the hold with eager expectation. Quick as thought, Dory tripped Dusenbach's heels, and hurled him, head foremost, down below. His men accompanied him, for Dory's associates had most ably seconded their leader. The hatches were closed and barred, and every avenue to the inner parts of the vessel locked. There was a running up and down the decks for a few minutes, and then the boats put off. But ere they reached the shore, three heavy columns of smoke rose from the Palatine, and in a few minutes after, the whole ship was a mass of flames.

The fate of those of the crew that landed is soon told. After a bloody battle over the spoils, in which many fell on both sides, a parley was held, and the few surviving sailors were not only spared but admitted to all the rights of islandship. Their ill-gotten wealth, however, as might have been expected, did not lead to comfort or happiness, but was rather the cause of incessant broils and mental anguish. After a certain time they could not endure the sight of each other; and some of them, as if determined to remove as far as possible from their companions in crime, loaded their boats, and removed to different points of the main coast. There, hard drinking, to drown the horrors of conscience, soon ended their days. At last only three remained on the island, and to these the curse of a miserable existence was extended to a preternatural old age.

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# THE MERCHANT'S CLERK.

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It was pouring with rain one Wednesday, in the month of March, 18—, about twelve o'clock, and had been raining violently the whole morning. Only one patient had called upon me up to the hour just mentioned—for how could invalids stir out in such weather? The wind was cold and bitter—the aspect of things without, in short, most melancholy and cheerless. "There are one or two poor souls," thought I, with a sigh, as I stepped from the desk at which I had been occupied for more than an hour writing, and stood looking over the blinds into the deserted and almost deluged street—"there are one or two poor souls that would certainly have been here this morning, according to appointment, but for this unfriendly weather. Their cases are somewhat critical—one of them especially—and yet they are not such as to warrant my apprehending the worst. I wish, by the way, I had thought of asking their addresses!—Ah—for the future I will make a point of taking down the residence of such as I may suspect to be in very humble or embarrassed circumstances. One can then, if necessary, call upon such persons—on such a day as this—at their own houses. There's that poor man, for instance, the bricklayer—he cannot leave his work except at breakfast time—I wonder how his poor child comes on! Poor fellow, how anxious he looked yesterday, when he asked me what I thought of his child! And his wife bed-ridden! Really I'd make a point of calling, if I knew where he lived! He can't afford a coach—that's out of the question. Well—it can't be

helped, however!" With this exclamation, half uttered, I looked at my watch, rang the bell, and ordered the carriage to be at the door in a quarter of an hour. I was sealing one of the letters I had been writing, when I heard a knock at the street door, and in a few moments my servant showed a lady into the room. She was apparently about four or five-and-twenty; neatly but very plainly dressed; her features, despite an air of languor, as if from recent indisposition, without being strictly handsome, had a pleasing expression of frankness and spirit—and her address was easy and elegant. She was, however, evidently flurried. She "hoped she should not keep me at home—she could easily call again"—— I begged her to be seated; and, in a quiet tone —at the same time proceeding with what I was engaged upon, that she might have a moment's interval in which to recover her self-possession—made some observations about the weather.

"It is still raining hard, I perceive," said I; "did you come on foot? Bless me, madam, why you seem wet through! Pray come nearer the fire"—stirring it up into a cheerful blaze—"shall I offer you a glass of wine, or wine and water? You look very chilly——"

"No, thank you, sir; I am rather wet, certainly, but I am accustomed to rain—I will, however, sit closer to the fire, if you please, and tell you in a few words my errand. I shall not detain you long, sir," she continued, in a tone considerably more assured; "the fact is, I have received a letter this morning from a friend of mine in the country, a young lady, who is an invalid, and has written to request I would call immediately upon some experienced physician, and obtain, as far as can be, his real opinion upon her case—for she fancies, poor girl! that they are concealing what is really the matter with her!"

"Well! she must have stated her case remarkably well, ma'am," said I with a smile, "to enable me to give any thing like a reasonable guess at her state without seeing her——"

"Oh—but I may be able to answer many of your questions, sir, for I am very well acquainted with her situation, and wa[illegible] good deal with her, not long ago."

"Ah—that's well. Then will you be so kind," giving a m[illegible]tory glance at my watch, "as to say what you know of her c[illegible]?

The fact is, I've ordered the carriage to be here in about a quarter of an hour's time, and have a long day's work before me!"

"She is—let me see, sir—I should say, about six years older than myself; that is, she is near thirty, or thereabouts. I should not think she was ever particularly strong. She's seen—poor thing!—a good deal of trouble lately." She sighed.

"Oh—I see, I understand! A little *disappointment—there's* the seat of the mischief, I suppose?" I interrupted, smiling, and placing my hand over my heart. "Isn't this really, now, the whole secret?"

"Why—the fact is—certainly, I believe—yes, I may say that love has had a good to do with her present illness—for it is *really* illness! She has been——" she paused, hesitated, and—as I fancied—coloured slightly—"crossed in love—yes! She was to have been—I mean—that is, she ought to have been married last autumn, but for this sad affair——" I bowed, looking again at my watch, and she went on more quickly to describe her friend as being naturally rather delicate—that this "disappointment" had occasioned her a great deal of annoyance and agitation—that it had left her now in a very low nervous way—and, in short, her friend suspected herself to be falling into a decline. That about two months ago she had had the misfortune to be run over by a chaise, the pole of which struck her on the right chest, and the horses' hoofs also trampled upon her, but no ribs were broken——"

"Ah, *this* is the most serious part of the story, ma'am—this looks like real illness! Pray, proceed, ma'am. I suppose your friend after this complained of much pain about the chest—is it so? Was there any spitting of blood?"

"Yes, a little—no—I mean—let me see——" Here she took out of her pocket a letter, and, unfolding it, cast her eye over it for a moment or two, as if to refresh her memory by looking at her friend's statement.

"May I be allowed, ma'am, to look at the letter in which your end describes her case?" I enquired, holding out my hand.

'There are some private matters contained in it, sir," she re-ed, quickly; "the fact is, there was some blood-spitting at time, which I believe has not yet quite ceased."

"And does she complain of pain in the chest?"

"Yes—particularly in the right side."

"Is she often feverish at night and in the morning?"

"Yes—very—that is, her hands feel very hot, and she is restless and irritable."

"Is there any perspiration?"

"Occasionally a good deal—during the night."

"Any cough?"

"Yes, at times very troublesome, she says."

"Pray, how long has she had it?—I mean, had she it before the accident you spoke of?"

"I first noticed it—let me see—ah, about a year after she was married."

"*After she was married!*" I echoed, darting a keen glance at her. She coloured violently, and stammered confusedly——

"No, no, sir—I meant about a year after the time when she *expected* to have been married."

There was something not a little curious and puzzling in all this. "Can you tell me, ma'am, what sort of a cough it is?" I enquired, shifting my chair, so that I might obtain a distincter view of her features. She perceived what I was about, I think, for she seemed to change colour a little, and to be on the verge of shedding tears. I repeated my question. She said that the cough was at first very slight; so slight that her friend had thought nothing of it, but at length it became a dry and painful one. She began to turn very pale. A suspicion of the real state of the case flashed across my mind.

"Now, tell me, ma'am, candidly—confess! Are not you speaking of yourself? You really look ill!"

She trembled, but assured me emphatically that I was mistaken. She appeared about to put some question to me, when her voice failed her, and her eyes, wandering to the window, filled with tears.

"Forgive me, sir! I am so anxious about my friend"—she sobbed—"she is a dear, kind, good"——her agitation increased.

"Calm—pray, calm yourself, ma'am—do not distress yourself unnecessarily! You must not let your friendly sympathies

overcome you in this way; or you will be unable to serve your friend as you wish—as she has desired!"

I handed to her a bottle of smelling salts, and, after pausing for a few moments, her agitation subsided.

"Well," she began again, tremulously, "what do you think of her case, sir? You may tell me candidly, sir,"—she was evidently making violent struggles to conceal her emotions—"for I assure you I will never make an improper use of what you may say—indeed I will not!—What do you really think of her case?"

"Why—if all that you have said be correct, I own I fear it is a bad case—certainly a bad one," I replied, looking at her scrutinisingly. "You have mentioned some symptoms that are very unfavourable."

"Do you—think—her case *hopeless*, sir?" she enquired, in a feeble tone, and looking at me with sorrowful intensity.

"Why, that is a very difficult question to answer—in her absence. One ought to see her—to hear her tell her own story—to ask a thousand little questions. I suppose, by the way, that she is under the care of a regular professional man?"

"Yes, I believe so—no, I am not sure; she *has* been, I believe."

I felt satisfied that she was speaking of herself. I paused, scarce knowing what to say. "Are her circumstances easy? Could she go to a warmer climate in the spring, or early part of the summer? I really think that change of scene would do her greater good than any thing I could prescribe for her."

She sighed. "It might be so; but—I know it could not be done. Circumstances, I believe——"

"Is she living with her family? Could not *they*——"

"Oh no, there's no hope *there*, sir!" she replied, with sudden impetuosity. "No, no; they would see both of us perish before they would lift a finger to save us," she added, with increasing vehemence of tone and manner. "So now it's all out—my poor, poor husband!" She fell into violent hysterics. The mystery was now dispelled—it was her husband's case that she had been all the while enquiring about. I saw it all! Poor soul, to gain my candid, my *real* opinion, she had devised an artifice to the

execution of which she was unequal; over-estimating her own strength, or rather not calculating upon the severe tests she would have to encounter.

Ringing the bell, I summoned a female servant, who, with my wife (she had heard the violent cries of my patient), instantly made her appearance, and paid all necessary attentions to the mysterious sufferer, as surely I might call her. The letter from which—in order to aid her little artifice—she had affected to read, had fallen upon the floor. It was merely a blank sheet of paper, folded in the shape of a letter, and directed, in a lady's hand-writing, to "Mrs. Elliott, No. 5, —— street." This I put into my pocket-book. She had also, in falling, dropped a small piece of paper, evidently containing my intended fee, neatly folded up. This I slipped into the reticule which lay beside her.

From what scene of wretchedness had this unhappy creature come to me?

The zealous services of my wife and her maid presently restored my patient, at least to consciousness, and her first look was one of gratitude for their assistance. She then attempted, but in vain, to speak, and her tears flowed fast. "Indeed, indeed, sir, I am no impostor! and yet I own I have deceived you! but pity me! Have mercy on a being quite forsaken and broken-hearted! I meant to pay you, sir, all the while. I only wished to get your true opinion about my unhappy husband. Oh how very, very, very wretched I am! What is to become of us! So, my poor husband!—there 's no hope! Oh that I had been content with ignorance of your fate!" She sobbed bitterly, and my worthy little wife exhibited so much firmness and presence of mind, as she stood beside her suffering sister, that I found it necessary gently to remove her from the room. What a melancholy picture of grief was before me in Mrs. Elliott, if that were her name. Her expressive features were flushed, and bedewed with weeping; her eyes swollen, and her dark hair, partially dishevelled, gave a wildness to her countenance, which added to the effect of her incoherent exclamations. "I do—I *do* thank you, sir, for your candour. I feel that you have told me the truth! But what is to become of us? My most dreadful fears are confirmed! But I ought o have been home before this, and am only keeping you——"

"Not at all, ma'am—pray don't——"

"But my husband, sir, is ill—and there is no one to keep the child but him. I ought to have been back long ago!" She rose feebly from her chair, hastily re-adjusted her hair, and replaced her bonnet, preparing to go. She seemed to miss something, and looked about the floor, obviously embarrassed at not discovering the object of her search.

"It is in your reticule, ma'am," I whispered—"and, unless you would affront and wound me, there let it remain. I know what you have been looking for—hush! do not think of it again. My carriage is at the door—shall I take you as far as —— street? I am driving past it."

"No, sir, I thank you; but—not for the world! My husband has no idea that I have been here; he thinks I have been only to the druggist. I would not have him know of this visit on any account. He would instantly suspect all." She grew again excited. "Oh what a wretch I am! How long must I play the hypocrite! I must look happy, and say that I have hope when I am despairing, and him dying daily before my eyes! Oh how terrible will home be after this! But how long have I suspected all this!"

I succeeded, at length, in allaying her agitation, imploring her to strive to regain her self-possession before reappearing in the presence of her husband. She promised to contrive some excuse for summoning me to see her husband, as if in the first instance, as though it were the first time I had seen or heard of either of them, and assured me that she would call upon me again in a few days' time. "But, sir," she whispered, hesitatingly, as I accompanied her through the hall to the street door, "I am really afraid we cannot afford to trouble you often."

"Madam, you will greatly grieve and offend me if you ever allude to this again before I mention it to you. Indeed you will, ma'am," I added, peremptorily but kindly; and reiterating my injunctions, that she should let me soon see her, or hear from her again, I closed the door upon her, satisfied that ere long would be laid before me another dark page in the volume of human life.

Having been summoned to visit a patient somewhere in the

neighbourhood of —— street that evening,—and being on foot, it struck me, as it was beginning again to rain heavily, that if I were to step into some one of the little shops close by, I might be sheltered a while from the rain, and also possibly gain some information as to the character and circumstances of my morning visitor. I pitched upon a small shop that was "licensed" to sell every thing, but especially groceries. The proprietor was a little lame old man, who was busy, as I entered, making up small packets of snuff and tobacco. He allowed the plea of the rain, and permitted me to sit down on the bench near the window. A couple of candles shed their dull light over the miscellaneous articles of merchandise with which the shop was stuffed. He looked like an old rat in his hoard!—He was civil and communicative, and I was not long in gaining the information I desired. He knew the Elliott's; they lived at No. 5, up two pair of stairs—but had not been there above three or four months. He thought Mr. Elliott was "ailing"—and for the matter of that, his wife didn't look the strongest woman in the world. "And pray what business, or calling, is he?" The old man put his spectacles back upon his bald wrinkled head, and, after musing a moment, replied, "Why, now, I can't take upon me to say, precisely like—but I think he 's something in the city, in the mercantile way—at least I've got it into my head that he *has* been such; but he also teaches music, and I know she sometimes takes in needle-work."

"Needle-work! does she indeed?" I echoed, taking her letter from my pocket-book, and looking at the beautiful—the fashionable hand in which the direction was written, and which, I felt confident, was her own.—"Ah!—then I suppose they're not over well to do in the world?"

"Why—you an't a-going to do any thing to them, sir, are you?—May I ask if you 're a lawyer, sir?"

"No, indeed, I am not," said I, with a smile—"nor is this a writ! It 's only the direction of a letter, I assure you; I feel a little interested about these people—at the same time, I don't know much about them, as you may perceive.—Were not you saying that you thought them in difficulties?"

"Why," he replied, somewhat re-assured—"maybe you're

not far from the mark in that either. They deal here—and they pay me for what they have—but their custom an't very heavy! 'Deed they has uncommon little in the grocery way, but pays reg'lar — and that's better than them, that has a good deal, and yet doesn't pay at all—an't it, sir?" I assented. "By the way, Mrs. Elliott was in here not an hour ago, for a moment, asking for some sago, because she said Mr. Elliott had taken a fancy to have some sago milk for his supper to-night—it was very unlucky, I hadn't half a handful left! So she was obliged to go to the druggist at the other end of the street. Poor thing, she looked so vexed—for she has quite a confidence, like, in what she gets here!"

"True, very likely!—you said, by the way, you thought he taught music? what kind of music?"

"Why, sir, he's rather a good hand at the flute, his landlady says—so he comes in to me about a month since, and he says to me, 'Bennet,' says he, 'may I direct letters for me to be left at your shop? I'm going to put an advertisement in the newspaper.'—'That,' says I, 'depends on what it's about—what are you advertising for?' (not meaning to be impudent)—and he says, says he—'Why, I've taken it into my head, Bennet, to teach the flute, and I'm a-going to try to get some one to learn it to.' So he put the advertisement in—but he didn't get more than one letter, and that brought him a young lad—but he didn't stay long. 'T was a beautiful black flute, sir, with silver on it—for Mrs. Hooper, his landlady—she's an old friend of my mistress, sir—showed it to us one Sunday, when we took a cup of tea with her, and the Elliotts was gone out for a walk.—I don't think he can teach it *now*, sir"—he continued, dropping his voice—"for, betwixt you and I, old Browning the pawnbroker, a little way up on the left hand side, has a flute in his window that's the very image of what Mrs. Hooper showed us that night I was speaking of. You understand me, sir?—Pawned—or sold—I'll answer for it—a-hem!"

"Ah, very probable—yes, very likely!" I replied, sighing—hoping my gossiping host would go on.

"And betwixt you and I, sir," he resumed, "it wasn't a bad thing for him to get rid of it, either; for Mrs. Hooper told us that

Mr. Elliott wasn't strong-like to play on it; and she used to hear Mrs. Elliott (she is an uncommon agreeable young woman, sir, to look at, and looks like one that has been better off), I was a-saying, however, that Mrs. Hooper used now and then to hear Mrs. Elliott cry a good deal about his playing on the flute, and 'spostulate to him on the account of it, and say 'you know it isn't a good thing for you, dear.'—Nor was it, sir—the doctors would say!"

"Poor fellow"—I exclaimed, with a sigh, not meaning to interrupt my companion—"of all things on earth—the *flute!*"

My interest in poor Mrs. Elliott and her husband was greatly increased by what I had heard from the gossiping grocer. How distinctly, though perhaps unconsciously, had he sketched the downward progress of respectable poverty! I should await the next visit of Mrs. Elliott with some eagerness and anxiety. Nearly a week, however, elapsed before I again heard of Mrs. Elliott, who called at my house one morning when I had been summoned to pay an early visit to a patient in the country. After having waited nearly an hour for me, she was obliged to leave, after writing the following lines on the back of an old letter:—

"Mrs. Elliott begs to present her respects to Doctor——, and to inform him, that, if quite convenient to him, she would feel favoured by his calling on Mr. Elliott any time to-day or to-morrow. She begs to remind him of his promise, not to let Mr. Elliott suppose that Mrs. Elliott has told him any thing about Mr. Elliott, except *generally* that he is poorly. The address is, No. 5, —— street, near —— square."

About three o'clock that afternoon, I was at their lodgings in —— street. No. 5, was a small decent draper's shop; and a young woman sitting at work behind the counter, referred me, on enquiring for Mr. Elliott, to the private door, which she said I could easily push open—that the Elliotts lived on the second floor—but she thought that Mrs. Elliott had just gone out. Following her directions, I soon found myself ascending the narrow staircase. On approaching the second floor, the door of the apartment I took to be Mr. Elliott's was standing nearly wide open; and the scene which presented itself I paused for a few moments to contemplate. Almost fronting the door, at a table,

on which were several huge legers and account-books, sate a young man, apparently about thirty, who seemed to have just dropped asleep over a wearisome task. His left hand supported his head, and in his right was a pen, which he seemed to have fallen asleep almost in the act of using. Propped up, on the table, between two huge books, a little towards his left-hand side, sate a child, seemingly a little boy, and a very pretty one, so engrossed with some plaything or another as not to perceive my approach. I *felt* that this was Mr. Elliott, and stopped for a few seconds to observe him. His countenance was manly, and had plainly been once very handsome. It was now considerably emaciated, overspread with a sallow hue, and wore an expression of mingled pain and exhaustion. The thin white hand holding the pen, also bespoke the invalid. His hair was rather darker than his wife's—and, being combed aside, left exposed to view an ample well-formed forehead. In short, he seemed a very interesting person. He was dressed in black, his coat being buttoned evidently for warmth's sake; for though it was March, and the weather very bleak and bitter, there was scarce any appearance of fire, in about the smallest grate I ever saw. The room was small, but very clean and comfortable, though not overstocked with furniture—what there was being of the most ordinary kind. A little noise I made attracted, at length, the child's attention. It turned round, started, on seeing a stranger, and disturbed its father, whose eyes looked suddenly but heavily at his child, and then at my approaching figure.

"Pray walk in," said he, with a kind of mechanical civility, but evidently not completely roused from sleep—"I—I—am very sorry—the accounts are not yet balanced—very sorry—been at them almost the whole day." He suddenly paused, and recollected himself. He had, it seems, mistaken me, at the moment, for some one whom he had expected.

"Dr. ——;" said I, bowing, and advancing.

"Oh! I beg your pardon, sir—Pray walk in, and take a seat" —I did so.—"I believe Mrs. Elliott called upon you this morning, sir? I am sorry she has just stepped out, but she will return soon. She will be very sorry she was not at home when you called."

"I should have been happy to see Mrs Elliott—but I understood from a few lines she left at my house, that this visit was to be paid to yourself—is it not so? Can I be of any assistance?"

"Certainly!—I feel far from well, sir. I have been in but middling health for some time—but my wife thinks me, I am sure, much worse than I really am, and frets herself a good deal about me."

I proceeded to enquire fully into his case; and he showed very great intelligence and readiness in answering all my questions. He had detected in himself, some years ago, symptoms of a liver complaint, which a life of much confinement and anxiety had since contributed to aggravate. He mentioned the accident alluded to by Mrs. Elliott; and when he had concluded a singularly terse and distinct statement of his case, I had formed a pretty decisive opinion upon it. I thought there was a strong tendency to hepatic phthisis, but that it might, with proper care, be arrested, if not even overcome. I expressed myself in very cautious terms.

"Do you really, candidly think, sir, that I have a reasonable chance of recovering my health?" he enquired, with a sigh, at the same time folding in his arms his little boy, whose concerned features, fixed in silence—now upon his father, and then upon me—as each of us spoke, almost led me to think that he appreciated the grave import of our conversation.

"Yes—I certainly think it probable that you would recover, provided, as I said before, you used the means I pointed out."

"And the chief of those means are—relaxation and country air?"

"Certainly."

"You consider them essential?" he enquired, despondingly.

"Undoubtedly. Repose, both bodily and mental—change of scenes, fresh air, and some medical treatment——"

He listened in silence, his eyes fixed on the floor, while an expression of profound melancholy overspread his countenance. He seemed absorbed in a painful reverie. I fancied that I could not mistake the subject of his thoughts; and ventured to interrupt them, by saying, in a low tone—"It would not be *very* expensive, Mr. Elliott, after all——"

"Ah, sir—that *is* what I am thinking about," he replied, with a deep sigh—and he relapsed into his former troubled silence.

"Suppose—suppose, sir, I were able to go into the country and rest a little, *a twelvemonth hence*, and in the mean time attend as much as possible to my health—is it probable that it would not *then* be too late?"

"Oh, come, Mr. Elliott—let us prefer the sunshine to the cloud," said I, with a cheerful air, hearing a quick step advancing to the door, which was opened, as I expected, by Mrs. Elliott, who entered breathless with haste.

"How do you do, ma'am—Mrs. Elliott, I presume?" said I, wishing to put her on her guard, and prevent her appearing to have seen me before.

"Yes, sir—Mrs. Elliott," said she, catching the hint—and then turning quickly to her husband, "how are you, love? I hope Henry has been good with you!"

"Very—he's been a very good little boy," replied Elliott, surrendering him to Mrs. Elliott, whom he was struggling to reach.

"But how are you, dear?" repeated his wife, anxiously.

"Pretty well," he replied, adding with a faint smile, at the same time pushing his foot against mine, under the table—"As you would have Dr. ——, he is here; but we can't make out why you thought fit to summon him in such haste."

"A very little suffices to alarm a lady," said I, with a smile. "I was sorry, Mrs. Elliott, that you had to wait so long for me this morning—I hope it did not inconvenience you?"—I began to think how I should manage to decline the fee I perceived they were preparing to give me, for I was obliged to leave, and drew on my gloves. "We've had a long *tête à tête*, Mrs. Elliott, in your absence. I must commit him to your gentle care—you will prove the better physician. He must submit to you in every thing; you must not allow him to exert himself too much over matters like these, "pointing to the huge folios lying upon the table"—he must keep regular hours—and, if you could all of you go to lodgings on the outskirts of the town, the fresh air would do all of you a world of good. You must undertake the case, ma'am—you must really pledge yourself to this"——The poor couple exchanged hurried glances, in silence. *He* attempted

a smile. "What a sweet little fellow is this!" said I, taking their little child into my arms—a miracle of neatness and cleanliness—and affecting to be eagerly engaged with him. He came to me readily, and forthwith began an incomprehensible address to me about "Da-da"—"pa-pa"—"ma-ma" and other similarly mysterious terms, which I was obliged to cut short by promising to come and talk again with him in a day or two. "Good day, Master Elliott!" said I, giving him back to his father, who at the same time slipped a guinea in my hand. I took it easily. "Come, sirrah," said I, addressing the child—"will you be my banker?" shutting his little fingers on the guinea.

"Pardon me—excuse me, doctor," interrupted Mr. Elliott, blushing scarlet, "this must not be. I really cannot——"

"Ah! may I not employ what banker I like?—Well—I 'll hear what you have to say about it when we meet again.—Farewell for a day or two,"—and with these words, bowing hastily to Mrs. Elliott, who looked at me, through her tear-filled eyes, unutterable things, I hurried down stairs. It may seem sufficiently absurd to dwell so long upon the insignificant circumstance of declining a fee—a thing done by my brethren daily—often as a matter of course—but it is a matter that has often occasioned me no inconsiderable embarrassment. 'T is really often a difficult thing to refuse a fee proffered by those one knows to be unable to afford it, so as not to make them uneasy under the sense of an obligation—to wound delicacy, or offend an honourable pride. I had, only a few days before, by the way, almost *asked* for my guinea from a gentleman worth many thousands a-year, and who dropped the fee into my hand as though it were a drop of his heart's blood.

I need not particularise the steps by which I became at length familiarly acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Elliott. I found them for a long while extremely reserved on the subject of their circumstances, except as far as an acknowledgment that their pecuniary resources were somewhat precarious. He was, or rather, it seemed, had been, a clerk in a merchant's counting house; but ill health obliged him at length to quit his situation, and seek for such occasional employment as would admit of being attended

to at his own lodgings. His labours in this way were, I perceived, notwithstanding my injunctions and his promises, of the most intense and unremitting, and, I feared, ill-requited description. But with what heart could I continue my remonstrances, when I felt convinced that thus he must toil, or starve. She also was forced to contribute her efforts towards their support, as I often saw her eagerly and rapidly engaged upon dresses and other articles too splendid to be for her own use. I could not help, one day, in the fulness of my heart, seeing her thus engaged, telling her that I had many a time since my marriage seen my wife similarly engaged. She looked at me with surprise for a few moments, and burst into tears. She forced off her rising emotions; but she was from that moment aware that I fully saw and appreciated her situation. It was on a somewhat similar occasion that she and her husband were at length induced to tell me their little history; and before giving the reader an account of what fell under my own personal observation, I shall lay before him, in my own way, the substance of several painfully-interesting conversations with this most unfortunate couple. Let not the ordinary reader spurn details of everyday life, such as will here follow —

> "Nor *grandeur* hear with a disdainful smile
> The short and simple annals of the poor!"

Owing to a terrible domestic calamity, it became necessary that Henry Elliott, an only son, educating at Oxford, and destined for the army, should suddenly quit the University, and seek a livelihood by his own exertions in London. The event which occasioned this sudden blight to his prospects was the suicide of his father, Major Elliott, whose addiction to gambling having for a long time seriously embarrassed his affairs, and nearly broken the heart of his wife, at length led him to commit the fatal act above spoken of. His widow survived the shock scarce a twelvemonth, and her unfortunate son was then left alone in the world, and almost entirely destitute. The trifling sum of ready money which remained in his possession after burying his mother was exhausted, and the scanty pittance afforded by relatives withdrawn, on the ground that he ought now to support himself, when his occasional enquiries after a situa-

tion at length led to the information that there was a vacancy for an outer-clerk in the great house of Hillary, Hungate, and Company, Mincing Lane, in the city. He succeeded in satisfying the junior partner, after submitting to sundry humiliating enquiries of his respectability and trust-worthiness; and he was forthwith received into the establishment, at a salary of 60*l*. per annum.

It was a sad day for poor Elliott when he sold off almost all his college books, and a few other remnants of gay and happy days, gone by probably for ever, for the purpose of equipping himself becomingly for his new and humble functions. He wrote an excellent hand; and, being of a decided mathematical turn, the arithmetic of the counting-house was easily mastered. What dismal drudgery had he henceforth daily to undergo! The tyranny of the upper clerks reminded him, with a pang, of the petty tyranny he had both experienced and inflicted at the public school, where he had been educated. How infinitely more galling and intolerable was his present bondage! Two-thirds of the day he was kept constantly on foot, hurrying from place to place, with bills, letters, etc., and on other errands; and—especially on the foreign post nights—he was detained slaving sometimes till nine or ten o'clock at night, copying letters, and assisting in making entries and balancing accounts, till his pen almost dropped from his wearied fingers. He was allowed an hour in the middle of the day for dinner—and even this little interval was often broken in upon to such an extent as proved seriously prejudicial to his health. After all the labours of the day, he had to trudge from Mincing Lane, along the odious City Road, up to almost the extremity of Islington, where were situated his lodgings, i. e., a little back bed-room, on the third floor, serving at once for his sitting and sleeping room, and for the use of which he paid at the rate of seven shillings a-week, exclusive of extras. Still he conformed to his cheerless lot, calmly and resolutely—with a true practical stoicism that did him honour. His regular and frugal habits enabled him to subsist upon his scanty salary with decency, if not comfort, and without running into debt—that infallible destructive of all peace of mind and self-respect! His sole enjoyment was an oc-

casional hour in the evening, spent in reading, and retracing some of his faded acquisitions in mathematics. Though a few of his associates were piqued at what they considered his sullen and inhospitable disposition, yet his obliging manners, his easy but melancholy deportment, his punctuality and exactitude in all his engagements, soon gained him the good-will of his brethren in the office, and occasionally an indication of satisfaction on the part of some one of his august employers. Thus, at length, Elliott overcame the numerous *desagremens* of his altered situation, seeking in constant employment to forget both the gloom and gaieties of the past. Two or three years passed over, Elliott continuing thus steadily in his course; and his salary, as a proof of the approbation of his employers, had been annually increased by 10*l.*, till he was placed in comparative affluence by the receipt of a salary of 90*l.* His severe exertions, however, insensibly impaired a constitution, never very vigorous, and he bore with many a fit of indisposition, rather than incur the expense of medical attendance. It may be added, that Elliott was a man of gentlemanly exterior, and engaging deportment—and then let us pass to a very different person.

Mr. Hillary, the head of the firm, a man of very great wealth, had risen from being a mere errand-boy, to his present eminence in the mercantile world, through a rare combination of good fortune with personal merit—*merit*, as far as concerns a talent for business, joined with prudence and enterprise. If ever there came a man within the terms of Burke's famous philippic, it was Mr. Hillary. His only object was money-making; he knew nothing, cared for nothing beyond it; till the constant contemplation of his splendid gains led his desires into the train of personal aggrandisement. With the instinctive propensities of a mean and coarse mind, he became as tyrannical and insolent in success, as in adversity he had been supple and cringing. No spark of generous or worthy feeling had ever been struck from the flinty heart of Jacob Hillary, of the firm of Hillary, Hungate, and Company. He was the idol of a constant throng of wealth-worshippers; to every body else, he was an object either of contem[illegible]ror. He had married the widow of a deceased partne[illegible] whom he had had several children, of whom one only live[illegible]yond infancy; a

generous, high-spirited, enthusiastic girl, whom her purse-proud father had destined, in his own weak and vain ambition, to become the wearer of a coronet. On this dazzling object were Mr. Hillary's eyes fixed with unwavering earnestness; he desired and longed to pour the tide of his gold through the channel of a peerage. In person, Mr. Hillary was of the middle size, but gross and corpulent. There was no intellect in his shining bald head, fringed with bristling white hair—nor was there any expression in his harsh and coarse features but such as faithfully adumbrated his character as above described.

This was the individual, who, in stepping one morning rather hastily from his carriage, at his counting-house door in Mincing Lane, fell from the carriage-step, most severely injuring his right ankle and shoulder. The injuries he received upon this occasion kept him confined for a long period to his bed, and for a still longer to an easy chair in the back drawing-room of his spacious mansion near Highbury. As soon as he was able to attend to business, he issued orders that as Elliott was the clerk whose residence was nearest to Bullion House, he should attend him every morning for an hour or two on matters of business, carrying Mr. Hillary's orders to the City, and especially bringing him, day by day, in a sealed envelope, *his banker's book!* A harassing post this proved for poor Elliott. Severe discipline had trained his temper to bear more than most men; and on these occasions it was tried to the uttermost. Mr. Hillary's active and energetic mind, kept thus in comparative and compulsive seclusion from the only concerns he cared for, or that could occupy it—always excepting the one great matter already alluded to—his imperious and irritable temper became almost intolerable. Elliott would certainly have thrown up his employment under Mr. Hillary in disgust and despair, had it not been for one circumstance—the presence of Miss Hillary—whose sweet appealing looks day after day melted away the resolution with which Elliott every morning came before her choleric and overbearing father, although they could not mitigate that father's evil temper, or prevent its manifestations. He insisted on her spending the greater part of every day in his presence, nor would allow her to quit it even at the periods when Elliott made his

appearance. The first casual and hasty glance that he directed towards her satisfied him that he had, in earlier and happy days, been many times in general society with her—her partner even in the dance. *Now*, however, he dared not venture to exhibit the slightest indication of recognition; and she, if struck by similar recollections, thought fit to conceal them, and behave precisely as though she then saw and heard of Mr. Elliott for the first time in her life. He could not, of course, find fault with her for this; but he felt it deeply and bitterly. He little knew how much he wronged her! She instantly recollected him—and it was only the dread of her father that restrained her from a friendly greeting. Having once adopted such a line of conduct, it became necessary to adhere to it—and she did. But could she prevent her *heart* going out in sympathy towards the poor, friendless, unoffending clerk, whom her father treated more like a mere menial than a respectable and confidential servant—him whom she knew to be

> "Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
> Fallen from his high estate?"

Every day that she saw him, her woman's heart throbbed with pity towards him; and pity is indeed akin to love. How favourably for him did his temper and demeanour contrast with those of her father!—And she saw him placed daily in a situation calculated to exhibit his real character—his disposition, whether for good or evil. The fact was, that he had become an object of deep interest—even of love—to her, long before the thought had ever occurred to him that she viewed him, from day to day, with feelings different from those with which she would look at the servant that stood at her father's side-board, at dinner. His mind was kept constantly occupied by his impetuous employer, and his hundred questions about every thing that had or had not happened every day in the City. Thus, for nearly three months, had these unconscious lovers been brought daily for an hour or two into each other's presence. He had little idea of the exquisite pain occasioned Miss Hillary by her father's harsh and unfeeling treatment of him, nor of the many timid attempts she made, in his absence, to prevent the recurrence of such treatment; and as for the great man, Mr. Hillary, it never crossed

his mind as being possible that two young hearts could by any means, when in different stations of society, one rich, the other poor, be warmed into a feeling of regard, and even love for one another.

One afternoon Elliott was obliged to come a second time that day from the City, bearing important despatches from Mincing Lane to Mr. Hillary, who was sitting in his invalid chair, flanked on one hand by his daughter, and on the other by a little table, on which stood wine and fruit. Poor Elliott looked, as well he might, exhausted with his long and rapid walk through the fervid sunshine.

"Well, sir—what now?" said her father quickly and peremptorily, at the same time eagerly stretching forth his hand to receive a letter which Elliott presented to him.

"Humph! Sit down there, sir, for a few minutes!" Elliott obeyed. Miss Hillary, who had been reading, touched with Elliott's pale and wearied look, whispered to her father—"Papa—Mr. Elliott looks dreadfully tired—may I offer him a glass of wine?"

"Yes, yes," replied Mr. Hillary, hastily, without removing his eyes from the letter he had that instant opened. Miss Hillary instantly poured out a glass of wine; and as Elliott approached to take it from the table, with a respectful bow, his eye encountered hers, which was instantly withdrawn—but not before it had cast a glance upon him, that electrified him, that fell suddenly like a spark of fire amid the combustible feelings of a most susceptible but subdued heart. It fixed the fate of their lives. The train so long laid had been at length unexpectedly ignited, and the confounded clerk returned, or rather staggered towards his chair, fancying that everything in the room was whirling around him. It was well for both of them that Mr. Hillary was at that eventful moment absorbingly engaged with a letter announcing the sudden arrival of three ships with large cargoes of an article of which he had been attempting a monopoly, and in doing so had sunk a very large sum of ready money. In vain did the conscious and confused girl—confused as Elliott—remove her chair to the window, with her back turned towards him, and

attempt to proceed with the book she had been reading. Her head seemed in a whirlpool.

Elliott's heart was beating quickly when the harsh tones of Mr. Hillary, who had worked himself into a very violent humour, fell upon his ear, directing him to return immediately to the City, and say he had no answer to send till the morning, when he was to be in attendance at an early hour.

Scarce knowing whether he stood on his head or his heels, Elliott hurriedly bowed, and withdrew. Borne along on the current of his tumultuous emotions, he seemed to fly down the swarming City Road; and when he reached the dull dingy little back counting-house where he was to be occupied till a late hour of the night, he found himself not in the fittest humour in the world for his task. *Could* he possibly be mistaken in interpreting Miss Hillary's look? Was it not corroborated by her subsequent conduct? And—by the way—now that he came to glance backwards into the two or three months during which he had been almost daily in her presence—divers little incidents started up into his recollection, all tending the same way. "Heigh-ho!" exclaimed Elliott, laying down his yet unused pen, after a long and bewildering reverie—"I wonder what Miss Hillary is thinking about! Surely I have had a kind of day-dream! It *can't* have really happened! And yet—how could there have been a mistake? Heaven knows I had taken nothing to excite or disorder me—except, perhaps, my long walk! Here's a *coup de soleil*, by the way, with a witness! But only to think of it—Miss Hillary—daughter of Jacob Hillary, Esq.—in love with—an under-clerk of her father—pho! it will never do! I'll think of it to-morrow morning." Thus communed Elliott with himself, by turns writing, pausing, and soliloquising, till the lateness of the hour compelled him to apply to his task in good earnest. He did not quit his desk till it had struck ten; from which period till that at which he tumbled into his little bed, he fancied that scarcely five minutes had elapsed. He made his appearance at Bullion House the next morning with a sad fluttering about the heart, but it soon subsided, for Miss Hillary was not present to prolong his agitation. He had not been seated for many minutes, however, before he observed her in a distant part of the gardens,

apparently tending some flowers. As his eye followed the movements of her graceful figure, he could not avoid a faint sigh of regret at his own absurdity in raising such a superstructure of splendid possibilities upon so slight a foundation. His attention was at that instant arrested by Mr. Hillary's multifarious commands for the City: and, in short, Miss Hillary's absence from town for about a week, added to a great increase of business at the counting-house, owing to an extensive failure of a foreign correspondent, gradually restored Elliott to his senses, and banished the intrusive image of his lovely tormentor. Her unequivocal exhibition of feeling, however — unequivocal at least *to him* — on the occasion of the next meeting, instantly revived all his former excitement, and plunged him afresh into the soft tumult of doubts, hopes, and fears, from which he had so lately emerged. Every day that he returned to Mr. Hillary, brought him fresh evidence of the extent to which he had encroached upon Miss Hillary's affections: and strange, indeed, must be that heart which, feeling itself alone and despised in the world, can suddenly find itself the object of a most enthusiastic and disinterested attachment without kindling into a flame of grateful affection. Was there any thing wonderful or improbable in the conduct attributed to Miss Hillary? No. A girl of frank and generous feeling, she saw in one, whom undeserved misfortune had placed in a very painful and trying position, the constant exhibition of high qualities; a patient and dignified submission to her father's cruel and oppressive treatment—a submission *on her account;* she beheld his high feeling conquering misfortune; she saw in his eye—his every look—his whole demeanour, susceptibilities of an exalted description:—and beyond all this—last, though not least, as Elliott acted the gentleman, so he *looked* it—and a handsome gentleman, too!—So it came to pass, then, that these two hearts became acquainted with each other, despite the obstacles of circumstance and situation. A kind of telegraphing courtship was carried on between them daily, which must have been observed by Mr. Hillary, but for the engrossing interest with which he regarded the communications of which Elliott was always the bearer. Mr. Hillary began, however, at length, to recover the use of his limbs, and ra-

pidly to gain general strength. He consequently announced one morning to Elliott, that he should not require him to call after the morrow. At this time the lovers had never interchanged a syllable together, either verbal or written, that could savour of love; and yet each was as confident of the state of the other's feelings, as though a hundred closely-written and closer-crossed letters had been passing between them. On the dreaded morrow he was pale and somewhat confused, nor was she far otherwise—but she had a sufficient reason in the indisposition of her mother, who had for many months been a bed-ridden invalid. As for Elliott, he was safe. He might have appeared at death's door without attracting the notice, or exciting the enquiries of his callous employer. As he rose to leave the room, Elliott bowed to Mr. Hillary—but his last glance was directed towards Miss Hillary—who, however, at that moment was, or appeared to be, too busily occupied with pouring out her excellent father's coffee, to pay any attention to her retiring lover, who consequently retired from her presence not a little piqued and alarmed.

They had no opportunity of seeing one another till nearly a month after the occasion just alluded to; when they met under circumstances very favourable for the expression of such feelings as either of them dared to acknowledge—and the opportunity was not thrown away. Mr. Hillary had quitted town for the north, on urgent business, which was expected to detain him for nearly a fortnight; and Elliott failed not, on the following Sunday, to be at the post he had constantly occupied for some months—namely, a seat in the gallery of the church attended by Mr. Hillary and his family, commanding a distant view of the great central pew—matted, hassocked, and velvet-cushioned, with a rich array of splendid implements of devotion, in the shape of Bibles and prayer-books, great and small, with gilt edges, and in blue and red morocco, being the favoured spot occupied by the great merchant—where he was pleased, by his presence, to assure the admiring vicar of his respect for him and the established church. Miss Hillary had long since been aware of the presence of her timid and distant lover on these occasions; they had several times nearly jostled against one another in going out of church, the consequence of which was generally a civil

though silent recognition of him. And this might be done with impunity, seeing how her wealthy father was occupied with nodding to every body, genteel enough to be so publicly recognised, and shaking hands with the select few who enjoyed his personal acquaintance. With what a different air and with what a different feeling did the great merchant and his humble clerk pass on these occasions down the aisle!—But to return. On the Sunday above alluded to, Elliott beheld Miss Hillary enter the church alone, and become the solitary tenant of the family pew. Sad truants from his prayer-book, his eyes never quitted the fair and solitary occupant of Mr. Hillary's pew; but she chose, in some wayward humour, to sit that morning with her back turned towards the part of the church where she knew Elliott to be, and never once looked up in that direction. They met, however, after the service, near the door, as usual; she dropped her black veil just in time to prevent his observing a certain sudden flush that forced itself upon her features; returned his modest bow; a few words of course were interchanged; it threatened, or Elliott chose to represent that it threatened, to rain (which he heartily wished it would, as she had come on foot, and unattended): and so in short, it came to pass that this very discreet couple were to be seen absolutely walking arm in arm towards Bullion House, at the slowest possible pace, and by the most circuitous route that could suggest itself to the flurried mind of Elliott. An instinctive sense of propriety, or rather prudence, led him to quit her arm just before arriving at that turn of the road which brought them full in sight of her father's house. There they parted—each satisfied as to the nature of the other's feelings, though nothing had then passed between them of an explicit or decisive character. It is not necessary for me to dwell on this part of their history. Where there is a will, it is said, there is a way; and the young and venturous couple found, before long, an opportunity of declaring to each other their mutual feelings. Their meetings and correspondence were contrived and carried on with the utmost difficulty. Great caution and secrecy were necessary to conceal the affair from Mr. Hillary, and those whose interest it was to give him early information on every matter that in any way concerned him. Miss Hillary buoyed herself up with the

hope of securing, in due time, her mother, and obtaining her intercessions with her stern and callous-hearted father. Some three months, or thereabouts, after the Sunday just mentioned, Mr. Hillary returned from the City, and made his appearance at dinner, in an unusually gay and lively humour. Miss Hillary was at a loss to conjecture the occasion of such an exhibition; but imagined it must be some great speculation of his which had proved unexpectedly successful. She was mistaken—it was a suitor for her hand and, more especially, her fortune—a titled suitor—which occasioned his gaiety. He was noted as a gamester, and for other unpromising qualities—but he was a lord! and Lord Scamp was the elected husband of his daughter.

His Lordship was a handsome heartless coxcomb, whose cool assurance and *business-like* attentions excited in Miss Hillary a disgust she could scarcely conceal. A thousand times she formed the desperate determination to confess all to her father, and risk the fearful consequences: for such she dreaded they would be, knowing well her father's disposition, and the terrible frustration of his favourite schemes which was taking place. Such constant anxiety and agitation, added to confinement in her mother's bedchamber, sensibly affected her health; and, at the suggestion of Elliott, with whom she contrived to keep up a frequent correspondence, she had at length determined upon opening the fearful communication to her father, and so being at all events delivered from the intolerable presence and attentions of Lord Scamp.

By what means it came to pass, neither she nor Elliott were ever able to discover; but, on the morning of the day she had fixed for her desperate *dénouement*, Mr. Hillary, during the temporary absence of his daughter, returned from the City about two o'clock, most unexpectedly, his manner disturbed, and his countenance pale and distorted. Accompanied by his solicitor, he made his way at once to his daughter's apartment, with his own hand seized her desk and carried it down to the drawing-room, and forced it open. Frantic with fury, he was listening to one of Elliott's fondest letters to his daughter being read by his solicitor, as she unconsciously entered the drawing-room, in walking attire. It would be in vain to attempt describing the scene

that immediately ensued. Old Hillary's lips moved, but his utterance was choked by the tremendous rage which possessed him, and forced him almost to the verge of madness. Trembling from head to foot, and his straining eyes apparently starting from their sockets, he pointed in silence to a little heap of opened letters lying on the table, on which stood also her desk. She perceived that all was discovered—and, with a smothered scream, fell senseless upon the floor. There, as far as her father was concerned, she might have continued; but his companion sprang to the bell, lifted her inanimate form from the floor, and gave her to the entering servants, who instantly bore her to her own room. Mr Jeffreys, the solicitor, a highly respectable man, to whom Mr. Hillary had hurried the instant that he recovered from the first shock occasioned by discovering his daughter's secret, vehemently expostulated with his client on hearing the violent and vindictive measures he threatened to adopt towards his daughter and Elliott; for the tone of the correspondence which then lay before him had satisfied him of the fatal extent to which his daughter's affections were engaged.

The next morning, Elliott was summoned from the City to Bullion House, whither he repaired, accordingly, about twelve o'clock, little imagining the occasion of his summons; for Miss Hillary had not communicated to him the intention she had formed of breaking the matter to her father, nor had she had any opportunity of telling him of the alarming discovery that had taken place. He perceived, nevertheless, certain symptoms of disturbance in the ominous looks of the porter who opened the hall-door and the servant who conducted him to the drawing-room, where he found Mr. Hillary and another gentleman—Mr. Jeffreys—seated together at a table covered with papers—both of them obviously agitated.

"So, sir," commenced Mr. Hillary, fixing his furious eye upon Elliott as he entered, "your villany 's found out—deep as you are!"

"Villany, sir?" echoed Elliott, indignantly, but turning very pale.

"Yes, sir—villany! villany! d——ble villany! ay—it's all

found out! Ah—ah—you cursed scoundrel!" exclaimed Mr. Hillary, with quivering lips and shaking his fist at Elliott.

"For God's sake, Mr. Hillary, be calm!" whispered Mr. Jeffreys, and then addressed Elliott with a quiet severity—"Of course, Mr. Elliott, you are aware of the occasion of this dreadful agitation on the part of Mr. Hillary?" Elliott bowed, with a stern inquisitive air, but did not open his lips.

"You beggarly brute—you filthy d——d upstart—you—you"—stammered Mr. Hillary, with uncontrollable fury, "your father was a scoundrel before you, sir—he cut his throat, sir——'

Elliott's face whitened in an instant, his expanding eye settled upon Mr. Hillary, and his chest heaved with mighty emotion. It was happy for the old man that Elliott at length recollected in him the father of Mary Hillary. He turned his eye for an instant towards Mr. Jeffreys, who was looking at him with an imploring compassionate expression; Elliott saw and felt that he was thunder-struck at the barbarity of his client. Elliott's eye remained fixed upon Mr. Jeffreys for nearly a minute, and then filled with tears. Mr. Jeffreys muttered a few words earnestly in the ear of Mr. Hillary, who seemed also a little staggered at the extent of his last sally.

"Will you take a seat, Mr. Elliott?" said Mr. Jeffreys, mildly. Elliott bowed, but remained standing, his hat grasped by his left hand with convulsive force. "You will make allowance, sir," continued Mr. Jeffreys, "for the dreadful agitation of Mr. Hillary, and reflect that your own conduct has occasioned it."

"So you dare to think of marrying my daughter, eh?" thundered Mr. Hillary, as if about to rise from his chair. "By——, but I'll spoil your sport though—I'll be even with you!" gasped the old man, and sunk back panting in his seat.

"You cannot really be in earnest, sir," resumed Mr. Jeffreys, in the same calm and severe tone and manner in which he had spoken from the first—"in thinking yourself entitled to form an attachment and alliance to Miss Hillary?"

"You see, sir, the wretchedness that your most unwarrantable—your artful—nay, your wicked and presumptuous conduct has brought upon this family—I earnestly hope that it is not too late for you to listen to reason—to abandon your insane pro-

jects." He paused, and Elliott bowed. "It is in vain," continued Mr. Jeffreys, pointing to the letters, "to conceal our fears that your attentions must have proved acceptable to Miss Hillary—but we give you credit for more honour, more good sense, than will admit of your carrying further this most unfortunate affair, of your persisting in such a wild—I must speak plainly—such an audacious attachment, one that is utterly unsuitable to your means, your prospects, your station, your birth, your education——"

"You will be pleased, sir, to drop the two last words," interrupted Elliott, sternly.

"Why, you fellow! why, you're my clerk! I pay you wages! —You're a hired servant of mine!" exclaimed Hillary, with infinite contempt.

"Well, sir," continued Jeffreys, "this affair is too important to allow of our quarrelling about words. Common sense must tell you that under no possible view of the case can you be a suitable match for Miss Hillary; and, therefore, common honesty enjoins the course you ought to pursue. However, sir," he added, in a sharper tone, evidently piqued at the composure and firmness maintained by Elliott, "the long and short of it is, that this affair will not be allowed to go further, sir. Mr. Hillary is resolved to prevent it—come what will."

"Ay, so help me God!" ejaculated Mr. Hillary, casting a ferocious glance at Elliott.

"Well, sir," said Elliott, with a sigh, "what would you have me do?—Pray proceed, sir."

"Immediately renounce all pretensions," replied Mr. Jeffreys, eagerly, "to Miss Hillary—return her letters—pledge yourself to discontinue your attempts to gain her affections, and I am authorised to offer a foreign situation connected with the house you at present serve, and to guarantee you a fixed income of 500*l.* a-year."

"Ay!—Hark'ee, Elliott, I'll do all this, so help me God!" suddenly interrupted Mr. Hillary, casting a look of imploring agony at Elliott, who bowed respectfully, but made no reply.

"If you *do* come together," said Hillary, "after all this, d——n me if I don't leave every penny I have in the world to an hos-

pital—or to a jail—in which one of you may perhaps end your days, after all!"

"Perhaps, Mr. Elliott," resumed Jeffreys, "I am to infer from your silence that you doubt—that you disbelieve these threats. If so, I assure you, you are grievously and fatally mistaken; you do not, believe me, know Mr. Hillary as I know him, and have known him these twenty years and upwards. I solemnly and truly assure you that he will as certainly do what he says, and for ever forsake you both, as you are standing now before us!"—He paused. "Again, sir, you may imagine that Miss Hillary has property of her own—at her own disposal. Do not so sadly deceive yourself on that score! Miss Hillary has, at this moment, exactly 600*l.* at her own disposal——"

"Ay—only 600*l.*—that's the uttermost penny——"

"And how long is that to last?—come, sir—allow me to ask you what you have to say to all this?" enquired Mr. Jeffreys, folding his arms, and leaning back in his chair, with an air of mingled chagrin and exhaustion. Elliott drew a long breath.

"I have but little to say, Mr. Jeffreys, in answer to what you have been stating," he commenced, with a melancholy but determined air. "However you may suspect me, and misconstrue, and misrepresent my character and motives, I never in my life meditated a dishonourable action."—He paused, thinking Mr. Hillary was about to interrupt him, but he was mistaken. Mr. Hillary was silently devouring every word that fell from Elliott, as also was Mr. Jeffreys. "I am here as *a hired servant*, indeed," resumed Elliott, with a sigh—"and I am the son of one who—who—was an unfortunate"—his eyes filled, and his voice faltered. For some seconds there was a dead silence. The perspiration stood on every feature of Mr. Hillary's agitated countenance. "But, of course, all this is as nothing here." He gathered courage, and proceeded with a calm and resolute air. "I know how hateful I must now appear to you. I *do* deserve bitter reproof—and surely I have had it, for my presumption in aspiring to the hand and heart of Miss Hillary. I tried long to resist the passion that devoured me, but in vain. Miss Hillary knew my destitute situation; she had many opportunities of ascertaining my character—she conceived a noble affection for me—I returned

her love; I was obliged to do it secretly—and, as far as that goes, I submit to any censure—I feel—I know that I have done wrong! —If Miss Hillary choose to withdraw her affection from me, I will submit, though my heart break. If, on the contrary, she continue to love me"—his eyes brightened—"I am not cowardly or base enough to undervalue her love."—Here Mr. Hillary struggled with Mr. Jeffreys, who, however, succeeded in restraining his client. — "If Miss Hillary condescends to become my wife——"

"Oh Lord! Oh Lord! Oh Lord!" groaned Mr. Hillary, clasping his hands upon his forehead—"open the windows, Mr. Jeffreys —or I shall be smothered—I am dying—I shall go mad——"

"I will retire, sir," said Elliott, addressing Mr. Jeffreys, who was opening the nearest window.

"No, but you shan't though" — gasped Mr. Hillary—"you shall stop here"—he panted for breath—"Hark'ee, sir,—dy'e hear, Elliott—listen"—he could not recover his breath. Mr. Jeffreys implored him to take time—to be cool—"Yes—now I'm cool enough—I've taken time—to consider—I have! Hark'ee, sir—if you dare to think—of having—my daughter—and if she —is such a cursed fool—as to think of having—you"—he stopped for a few seconds for want of breath—"why—look'ee, sir—so help me God—you may both—both of you—and your children— if you have any—die in the streets—like dogs—I've done with you—both of you—not a farthing—not a morsel of bread— —— me if I do!"—Here he breathed like a hard-run horse. "Now, sir—like a thief as you are!—go on courting—my daughter— marry her! ruin her! go, and believe all that I'm saying is—a lie!—go, and hope—that, by and by, I'll forgive you—and all that—try it, sir! Marry, and see whether I give in!—I'll teach you—to rob an old man—of his child!—The instant you leave this house, sir—this gentleman—makes my will—he does!—and when I'm dead—you may both of you—go to Doctors' Commons —borrow a shilling, if you can—and see if your names—or your children's—are in it, ha, ha, ha!" he concluded with a bitter and ghastly laugh, snapping his shaking fingers at Elliott—"Get away, sir—marry, after this, if you dare!——"

Elliott almost reeled out of the room, and did not fully recol-

lect himself till the groom of his aristocratic competitor, Lord Scamp, whose cab was dashing up to the gates of Bullion House, shouted to him to get out of the way, or be driven over!

He was not dismissed, as he had expected, from the service of Mr. Hillary, who retained him, at the suggestion of Mr. Jeffreys—that shrewd person feeling that he could then keep Elliott's movements more distinctly under his own eye, and have more frequent opportunities of negotiating with him on behalf of Mr. Hillary. Elliott's position in the establishment was such as never brought him into personal contact with Mr. Hillary; and apparently no one but himself and Mr. Hillary were acquainted with the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed. As before hinted, Mr. Jeffreys was incessant in his efforts, both personally and by letter, to induce Elliott to break off the disastrous connexion; and, from an occasional note which Miss Hillary contrived—despite all the *espionage* to which she was subjected—to smuggle to him, he learnt, with poignant sorrow, that his apprehensions of the treatment she would receive at the hands of her father were but too well founded. She repelled, with an affectionate and indignant energy, his offers and proposals to break off the affair. She told him that her spirit rose with the cruelty she suffered, and declared herself ready, if he thought fit, to fly from the scene of trouble, and be united to him for ever. Many and many a sleepless night did such communications as these ensure to Elliott. He saw infinite danger in attempting a clandestine marriage with Miss Hillary, even should she be a readily-consenting party. His upright and manly disposition revolted from a measure so underhand, so unworthy; and yet, what other course lay open to them? His own position at the counting-house was becoming very trying and painful. It soon became apparent that, on some account or another, he was an object of almost loathing disregard to the august personage at the head of the establishment; and the consequence was, an increasing infliction of petty annoyances and hardships by those connected with him in daily business. He was required to do more than he had ever before been called upon to do, and felt himself the subject of frequent and offensive remark, as well as suspicion. The ill-treatment of his superiors, however, and the

impertinences of his equals and inferiors, he treated with the same patient and resolute contempt, conducting himself with the utmost vigilance and circumspection, and applying to business —however unjustly accumulated upon him—with an energy, perseverance, and good humour, that only the more mortified his unworthy enemies. Poor Elliott! why did he continue in the service of Hillary, Hungate, and Company? How utterly chimerical was the hope he sometimes entertained of its being possible that his exemplary conduct could ever make any impression upon the hard heart of Mr. Hillary!

On returning to the counting-house, one day, from the little chop-house at which he had been swallowing a hasty and frugal dinner, he observed indications of some unusual occurrence. No one spoke to him; all seemed to look at him as with suspicion and alarm. He had hardly hung up his hat, and reseated himself at his desk, when a message was brought to him from Mr. Hillary, who required his immediate attendance in his private room. Thither, therefore, he repaired, with some surprise—and with more surprise beheld all the partners assembled, together with the head clerk, the solicitor of the firm, and one or two strangers. He had hardly closed the door after himself, when Mr. Hillary pointed to him, saying, "This is your prisoner—take him into custody."

"Surrender, sir—you 're our prisoner," said one of the two strangers, both of whom now advanced to him, one laying hold of his collar, the other fumbling in his pocket, and taking out a pair of handcuffs. Elliott staggered several paces from them on hearing the astounding language of Mr. Hillary, and but that he was held by the officer who had grasped his collar, seemed likely to have fallen. He turned deadly pale. For a second or two he spoke not.

"Fetch a glass of water," said Mr. Fleming, one of the partners, observing Elliott's lips losing their colour, and moving without uttering any sound. But he recovered himself from the momentary shock, without the aid of the water, which seemed to have been placed in readiness beforehand, so soon was it produced. Pushing aside the officer's hand that raised the glass to his lips, he exclaimed, "What is the meaning of this, sir? How

dare you deprive me of my liberty, sir?"—addressing Mr. Hillary. —"What am I charged with?"

"Embezzling the money of your employers," interposed the solicitor. As he spake, poor Elliott fixed upon him a stare of horror, and after standing and gazing in silence for several moments, attempted to speak, but in vain; and fell in a kind of fit into the arms of the officers.

Elliott was examined, and fully committed to Newgate: and, on the next morning, the following paragraph appeared in the newspapers:—

"—— Street. Henry Elliott, a clerk in the house of Hillary, Hungate, and Company, Mincing Lane (who was brought to this office a week ago, charged with embezzling the sum of 15*l.*, the money of his employers, and suspected of being an accomplice of the young man who was recently committed to Newgate from this office on a similar charge), was yesterday fully committed for trial. He is, we understand, a young man of respectable connexions, and excellent education. From his appearance and demeanour he would have seemed incapable of committing the very serious offence with which he stands charged. He seemed horror-struck on the charge being first preferred, and asseverated his innocence firmly, and in a very impressive manner, declaring that he was the victim of a conspiracy. In answer to a question of the magistrate, one of his employers stated, that up to the time of preferring this charge, the prisoner had borne an excellent character in the house."

The newspaper containing this paragraph found its way, on the evening of the day on which it appeared, into Miss Hillary's room, through her maid, as she was preparing to undress, and conveyed to her the first intimation of poor Elliott's dreadful situation. The moment that she had read it, she sprung to her feet, pushed aside her maid, who attempted to prevent her quitting her apartment, and, with the newspaper in her hand, flew wildly down the stairs, and burst into the dining-room, where her father was sitting alone, in his easy-chair, drawn close to the fire. "Father!" she almost shrieked, springing to within a yard or two of where he was sitting—"Henry Elliott robbed you! Henry Elliott in prison! A common thief!" pointing to the

newspaper, with frantic vehemence. "Is it so? And YOU his accuser? Oh, no! no! Never!" she exclaimed, a wild smile gleaming on her pallid countenance, at the same time sweeping to and fro before her astounded father, with swift but stately steps, continuing, as she passed and repassed him—"No, sir! no! no! no!—Oh, for shame! for shame, father! Shame on you! shame! His father dead! His mother dead! No one to feel for him! No one to protect him! No one to love him—but —ME!"——and accompanying the last few words with a loud and thrilling laugh, she fell at full length insensible upon the floor.

Her father sat cowering in his chair, with his hands partially elevated—feeling as though an angry angel had suddenly flashed upon his guilty privacy; and when his daughter fell, he had not the power to quit his chair and go to her relief for several seconds. A horrible suspicion crossed his mind, that she had lost her reason; and he spent the next hour and a half in a perfect ecstasy of terror. As soon, however, as the apothecary summoned to her assistance had assured him that there were, happily, no grounds for his fears—that she had had a very violent fit of hysterics, but was now recovered, and fallen asleep—he ordered the horses to his carriage, and drove off at top speed to the chambers of his City solicitor, to instruct him to procure Elliott's instant discharge. That, of course, was utterly impossible; and Mr. Hillary, almost stupified with terror, heard that the King of England himself could not accomplish such an object! That Elliott must now remain in prison till the day of trial—about a month or six weeks hence—and then be brought to the bar as a felon! The six weeks passed over the head of poor Elliott accordingly as a prisoner. At length the day of trial came. Hillary was called as a witness, and trembled so excessively as to call forth some encouraging expressions from the Bench. The Judge who tried the case decided that there was no evidence worth a straw against the prisoner, and consequently directed the Jury to acquit him, which they did instantly, adding their unniamous opinion, that the charge against him appeared both frivolous and malicious.

"Am I to understand, my Lord, that I leave the court freed

from all taint, from all dishonour?" enquired Elliott, after the foreman had expressed the opinion of the jury.

"Certainly—most undoubtedly you do," replied the Judge.

"And, if I think fit, I am at liberty hereafter to expose and punish those who have wickedly conspired to place me here on a false charge?"

"Of course, you have your remedy against any one," replied the cautious judge, "whom you can prove to have acted illegally."

Elliott darted a glance at Mr. Hillary, which made his blood rush tumultuously towards his guilty heart, and, bowing respectfully to the Court, withdrew from the ignominious spot which he had been so infamously compelled to occupy. He left the prison a little after eight o'clock; and wretched indeed were his feelings as the turnkey, opening the outermost of the iron-bound and spiked doors, bade him farewell, gruffly adding—"Hope we mayn't meet again, my hearty!"

"I hope not, indeed!" replied Elliott, with a sigh; and, descending the steps, found himself in the street. He scarce knew, for a moment, whither to direct his steps, staggering, overpowered with the strange feeling of suddenly-recovered liberty. The sad reality, however, soon forced itself upon him. What was to become of him? He felt wearied and faint, and almost wished he had begged the favour of sleeping, for the night, even in the dreary dungeons from which he had been but that moment released. Thus were his thoughts occupied, as he moved slowly towards Fleet Street, when a female figure approached him, muffled in a large shawl.

"Henry—dearest Henry!" murmured the half-stifled voice of Miss Hillary, stretching towards him both her hands; "so you are free! You have escaped from the snare of the wicked! Thank God—thank God! Oh, what have we passed through, since we last met! Why, Henry, will you not speak to me? Do you forsake the daughter, for the sin of her father?"

Elliott stood staring at her as if stupified.

"Miss Hillary!" he murmured, incredulously.

"Yes—yes! I am Mary Hillary; I am your own Mary. But, oh, Henry, how altered you are! How thin! How pale and ill

you look! I cannot bear to see you!" And, covering her face with her hands, she burst into a flood of tears.

"I can hardly—believe—that it is Miss Hillary," muttered Elliott—"But—your *father*!—Mr. Hillary! What will he say if he sees you? Are not you ashamed of being seen talking to a wretch like me, just slipped out of Newgate?"

"Ashamed? My Henry—do not torture me! I am heart-broken for your sake! It is my own flesh and blood that I am ashamed of. That it could ever be so base——"

Elliott suddenly snatched her into his arms, and folded her to his breast with convulsive energy.

Miss Hillary that night sought refuge in the humble residence of an old servant of her father's. Here she lived, for a few days, in terrified seclusion—but she might have spared her alarms, for her father received the news of her flight with sullen apathy—merely exclaiming, "Well—as she has made her bed she must lie upon it." He made no enquiries after her, nor attempted to induce her to return. When at length apprised of her residence, he did not go near the house. He had evidently given up the struggle in despair, and felt indifferent to any fate that might befall his daughter. He heard that the banns of marriage between her and Elliott were published in the parish church where her new residence was situated—but offered no opposition whatever. He affixed his signature, when required, to the document necessary to transfer to her the sum of money—600*l.*, standing in her name in the funds, in sullen silence.

So this ill-fated couple were married, no one attending at the brief and cheerless ceremony but a friend of Elliott's, and the humble couple from whose house she had been married.

Elliott had commenced legal proceedings against Mr. Hillary on account of his malicious prosecution. He was certain of success, and of thereby wringing from his reluctant and wicked father-in-law a very considerable sum of money—a little fortune in his present circumstances. With a noble forbearance, however, and yielding to the entreaties of his wife, who had not lost, in her marriage, the feelings of a daughter towards her erring parent, he abandoned them; his solicitor writing, at his desire, to inform Mr. Hillary of the fact that his client had determined

to discontinue proceedings, though he had had the certainty of success before him; and that, for his wife's sake, he freely forgave Mr. Hillary.

This letter was returned with an insolent message from Mr. Hillary—and there the affair ended.

A few days after her marriage, Mrs. Elliott received the following communication from Mr. Jeffreys:—

"MADAM,

"Mr. Hillary has instructed me to apprise you, as I now do with great pain, of his unalterable determination never again to recognise you as his daughter, or receive any communication, of any description, from either your husband or yourself—addressed either to Mr. or Mrs. Hillary; whom your undutiful and ungrateful conduct, he says, has separated from you for ever.

"He will allow to be forwarded to any place you may direct, whatever articles belonging to you may yet remain at Bullion House, on your sending a list of them to my office.

"Spare me the pain of a personal interview on the matter, and believe me when I unfeignedly lament being the medium of communicating the intelligence contained in this letter.

"I am, Madam,

"Your humble servant,

"JONATHAN JEFFREYS.

"To Mrs. Elliott."

With a trembling hand, assisted by her husband, she set down, after much hesitation, a few articles—books, dress, one or two jewels, and her little dog, Cato. Him, however, Mr. Hillary had caused to be destroyed the day after he discovered her flight. The other articles were sent to her immediately; and with a bitter fit of weeping did she receive them, and read the fate of her merry little favourite, who had frisked about her to the last with sportive affection, when almost every body else scowled at and forsook her!—Thus closed for ever, as she too surely felt, all connexion and communication with her father and mother.

Elliott regarded his noble-spirited wife, as well he might, with a fondness bordering on idolatry. The vast sacrifice she had made for him over-powered him whenever he adverted to it,

and inspired him, not only with the most tender and enthusiastic affection and gratitude, but with the eagerest anxiety to secure her, by his own efforts, at least a comfortable home. He engaged small but respectable lodgings in the Borough, to which they removed the day after their marriage; and, after making desperate exertions, he had the gratification of procuring a situation as clerk in a respectable mercantile house in the City, and which he had obtained through the friendly but secret services of one of the members of the firm he had last served. His superior qualifications secured him a salary of 90*l.* a-year, with the promise of its increase if he continued to give satisfaction. Thus creditably settled, the troubled couple began to breathe a little more freely; and, in the course of a twelvemonth, Mrs. Elliott's poignant grief first declined into melancholy, which was at length mitigated into a pensive, if not cheerful, resignation. She moved in her little circumscribed sphere as if she had never occupied one of splendour and affluence. How happily passed the hours they spent together in the evening after he had quitted the scene of his daily labours—he reading, or playing on his flute, which he did very beautifully, and she busily employed with her needle! How they loved their neat little parlour, as they sometimes involuntarily compared it—*she*, with the spacious and splendid apartments which had witnessed so much of her suffering at Bullion House—*he*, with the dreadful cells of Newgate! And their Sundays! What sweet and calm repose they brought! How she loved to walk with him after church hours in the fresh and breezy places—the Parks—though a pang occasionally shot through her heart, when she observed her father's carriage—he the solitary occupant—rolling leisurely past them! The very carriage in which she and her little Cato had so often driven! But thoughts such as these seldom intruded; and, when they did, only drove her closer to her husband—*a pearl* to her, indeed—if it may be not irreverently spoken—*of great price*—a price she never once regretted to have paid.

Ye fond unfortunate souls! what days of darkness were in store for you!—About eighteen months after their marriage, Mrs. Elliott, after a lingering and dangerous *accouchement*, gave birth to a son—the little creature I had seen. How they con-

sulted together about the means of apprising Mr. Hillary of the birth of his grandson—and fondly suggested to each other the *possibility* of its melting the stern stubborn resolution he had formed concerning them!—He heard of it, however, manifesting about as much emotion as he would on being told by his housekeeper of the kittening of his kitchen cat!—The long fond letter she had made such an effort to write to him, and which poor Elliott had trudged all the way to Highbury to deliver, with tremulous hand, and a beating heart, to the porter at the lodge of Bullion House, was returned to them the next morning by the two-penny post, unopened! What delicious agony was it to them to look at—to hug to their bosoms—the little creature that had no friend—no relative on earth but them! How often did his eye open surprisedly upon her, when her scorching tear dropped upon his tiny face!

She had just weaned her child, and was still suffering from the effects of nursing, when there happened the first misfortune that had befallen them since their marriage. Mr. Elliott was one night behind his usual hour of returning from the City—and his anxious wife's suspense was terminated by the appearance at their door of a hackney-coach, from which there stepped out a strange gentleman, who hastily knocked at the door, and returned to assist another gentleman, in lifting out the apparently inanimate figure of her husband! Pale as death, she rushed down stairs, her child in her arms, and was saved from fainting only by hearing her husband's voice, in a low tone, assuring her that he was "not much hurt"—that he had had "a slight accident." The fact was, that in attempting most imprudently to shoot across the street between two approaching vehicles, he was knocked down by the pole of one of them—a post-chaise; and when down, before the post-boy could stop, one of the horses had kicked the prostrate passenger upon his right side. The two humane gentlemen who had accompanied him home, did all in their power to assuage the terrors of Mrs. Elliott. One of them ran for the medical man, who fortunately lived close at hand; and he pronounced the case to be, though a serious one, and requiring great care, not attended with dangerous symptoms—at least *at present*. His patient never quitted his bed for three

months; at the end of which period, his employers sent a very kind message, regretting the accident that had happened, and, still more, that they felt compelled to fill up his situation in their house, as he had been now so long absent, and was likely to continue absent for a much longer time: and they at the same time paid him all the salary that was due in respect of the period during which he had been absent, and a quarter's salary beyond it. Poor Elliott was thrown by this intelligence into a state of deep despondency, which was increased by his surgeon's continuing to use the language of caution, and assuring him—disheartening words!—that he must not think of engaging in active business for some time yet to come. It was after a sleepless night that he and his wife stepped into a hackney-coach, and drove to the Bank to sell out 50*l.* of their precious store, in order to liquidate some of the heavy expenses attendant on his long illness. Alas! what prospect was there, either of replacing what they now took, or of preserving the remainder from similar diminutions?—It was now that his admirable wife acted indeed the part of a guardian angel; soothing by her fond attentions his querulous and alarmed spirit—and, that she might do so, struggling hourly to conceal her own grievous apprehensions—her hopeless despondency. As may be supposed, it had now become necessary to practice the closest economy in order to keep themselves out of debt, and to avoid the necessity of constantly drawing upon the very moderate sum which yet stood in his name in the funds. How often, nevertheless, did the fond creature risk a chiding—and a severe one—from her husband, by secretly procuring for him some of the little delicacies recommended by their medical attendant, and of which no entreaties could ever prevail upon her to partake!

Mr. Hillary's temper had become ten times worse than before, since his daughter's departure, owing to that as well as sundry other causes. Several of his speculations in business proved to be very unfortunate, and to entail harassing consequences, which kept him constantly in a state of feverish irritability. Poor Mrs. Hillary continued still a hopeless paralytic, deprived of the powers both of speech and motion: all chance, therefore, of *her* precious intercession was too probably for ever at an end. In

vain did Mrs. Elliott strive to interest several of her relatives in her behalf: they *professed* too great a dread of Mr. Hillary to attempt interfering in such a delicate and dangerous matter; and *really* had a very obvious interest in continuing, if not increasing, the grievous and unnatural estrangement existing between him and his daughter. There was one of them—a Miss Gubbley, a maiden aunt, or cousin of Mrs. Elliott—that had wormed herself completely into Mr. Hillary's confidence, and, having been once a kind of housekeeper in the establishment, now reigned supreme at Bullion Lodge: an artful, selfish, vulgar person, an object to Mrs. Elliott of mingled terror and disgust. This was the being that,

"toad-like, sat squatting at the ear"

of her father, probably daily suggesting every hateful consideration that could tend to widen the breach already existing between him and his daughter. This creature, too, had poor Mrs. Elliott besieged with passionate and humiliating entreaties, till they were suddenly and finally checked by a display of such intolerable insolence and heartlessness as determined Mrs. Elliott, come what would, to make no further efforts in *that* quarter. She returned home, on the occasion just alluded to, worn out in body and mind. A copious flood of tears, accompanying her narration to her husband of what had happened, relieved her excitement; she took her child into her arms, and his playful little fingers unconsciously touching the deep responsive chords of a mother's heart, she forgot, in the ecstasy of the moment, as she folded him to her bosom, all that had occurred to make her unhappy and add to the gloom of their darkening prospects!

Closer and closer now became their retrenchments; every source of expenditure being cut off that was not absolutely indispensable. None, she told me, occasioned them a greater pang than giving up their little pew in —— Church, and betaking themselves, Sunday after Sunday, to the humbler and more appropriate sittings provided in the aisle. But was this their communion and contact with poverty unfavourable to devotion? No. The serpent pride was crushed, and dared not lift his bruised head to disturb or alarm! God then drew near to the deserted couple, "weary, and heavy laden," and "cast

out" by their *earthly* father! Yes—there she experienced a holy calm—a resignation—a reality in the services and duties of religion—which she had never known when sitting amid the trappings of ostentatious wealth, in the gorgeous pew of her father!

It was grievous to see the desperate but unavailing struggle made by both of them to retrieve their circumstances, and provide against the expensive and trying time that was approaching. He was slaving at his account-books from morning to midnight, scarce allowing himself a few minutes for his meals; and she had become a mere fag to a fashionable milliner, undertaking all such work as could be done at her own residence, often sitting up half the night, and yet earning the merest trifle. Then she had also to look after her husband and child, for they could not afford to keep a regular attendant. Several articles of her husband's dress and her own, and almost all that belonged to the child, she often washed at night with her own hands!

As if these unfortunate people were not sufficiently afflicted already—as if any additional ingredient in their cup of sorrow were requisite—symptoms, of a more grievous calamity than had yet befallen poor Elliott, began to exhibit themselves in him. His severe and incessant application, by day and night, coupled with the perpetual agitation and excitement of his nervous system, began to tell upon his eyesight. I found him, on one of my morning visits, labouring under great excitement; and, on questioning him, I feared he had but too good reason for his alarm, as he described, with fearful distinctness, certain sensations and appearances which infallibly betokened, in my opinion, after examining his eyes, the presence of incipient *amaurosis* in both eyes. He spoke of deep-seated pains in the orbits—perpetual sparks and flashes of light—peculiar haloes seen around the candle—dimness of sight—and several other symptoms, which I found, on enquiry, had been for some time in existence, but he had never thought of noticing them till they forced themselves upon his startled attention.

"Oh, my God!" he exclaimed, clasping his hands, and looking upwards, "spare my sight! O, spare my sight—or what

will become of me? Beggary seems to be my lot—but *blindness* to be added!" He paused, and looked the image of despair.

"Undoubtedly I should deceive you, Mr. Elliott," said I, after making several further inquiries, "if I were to say that there was no danger in your case. Unfortunately, there does exist ground for apprehending that, unless you abstain, and in a great measure, from so severely taxing your eyesight as you have of late, you will run the risk of permanently injuring it.

"Oh, doctor! it is easy to talk," he exclaimed, with involuntary bitterness, "of my ceasing to use and try my sight; but how am I to do it? How am I to live?—Tell me *that!* Will money drop from the skies into my lap, or bread into the mouths of my wife and child? What is to become of us? Merciful God! and just at this time, too! My wife pregnant"—I thanked God she was not present!—"our last penny almost slipping from our hands—and I, who should be the stay and support of my family, becoming BLIND! Oh, God—oh, God, what frightful crimes have I committed, to be punished thus! Would I had been transported or hanged," he added suddenly, "when the old ruffian threw me into Newgate! But"—he turned ghastly pale—"if I were to die *now*, what good could it do?" At that moment the slow, heavy, wearied step of his wife was heard upon the stairs, and her entrance put an end to her husband's exclamations. I entreated him to intermit, at least for a time, his attentions to business, and prescribed some active remedies, and he promised to obey my instructions. Mrs. Elliott sat beside me with a sad exhausted air, which touched me almost to tears. What a situation—what a prospect was hers! How was she to prepare for her coming confinement? How procure the most ordinary comforts—the necessary attendance? Deprived as her husband and child must be, for a time, of her affectionate and vigilant attentions, what was to become of them? Who supply her place? Her countenance too plainly showed that all these topics constantly agitated her mind.

A day or two after this interview I brought them the intelligence I had seen in the newspapers of Mrs. Hillary's death, which I communicated to them very carefuly, fearful of the effect

it might produce upon Mrs. Elliott in her critical situation.' She wept bitterly; but the event had been too long expected by her to occasion any violent exhibition of grief. As they lay awake that night in melancholy converse, it suddenly occurred to Mrs. Elliott that the event which had just happened might afford them a last chance of regaining her father's affections, and they determined to seize the opportunity of appealing to his feelings when they were softened by his recent bereavement. The next morning the wretched couple set out on their dreary pilgrimage to —— Square—it being agreed that Elliott should accompany her to within a door or two of her father's house, and there await the issue of her visit. With slow and trembling steps, having relinquished his arm, she approached the dreaded house, whose large windows were closed from the top to the bottom. The sight of them overcame her; and she paused for a moment, holding by the area railings.

What dark and bitter thoughts and recollections crowded in a few seconds through her mind! Here, in this great mansion, was her living—her tyrannical—her mortally-offended father; here lay the remains of her poor good mother—whom she had fled from—whose last thoughts might perhaps have been about her persecuted daughter—and that daughter was now trembling like a guilty thing before the frowning portals of her widowed and, it might be, inexorable father. She felt very faint, and beckoning hastily to her husband, he stepped forward to support her, and led her from the door. After slowly walking round the square, she returned, as before, to the gloomy mansion of her father, ascended the steps, and, with a shaking hand, pulled the bell.

"What do you want, young woman?" enquired a servant from the area.

"I wish to see Joseph—is he at home?"—she replied, in so faint a voice, that the only word audible in the area was that of Joseph—the porter—who had entered into her father's service in that capacity two or three years before her marriage. In a few minutes Joseph made his appearance at the hall-door, which he softly opened.

"Joseph!—Joseph! I 'm very ill," she murmured, leaning

against the door-post—"let me sit in your chair for a moment."

"Lord have mercy on me—my young mistress!" exclaimed Joseph, casting a hurried look behind him, as if terrified at being seen in conversation with her—and then, hastily stepping forward, he caught her in his arms, for she had fainted. He placed her in his great covered chair, and called one of the female servants, who brought up with her, at his request, a glass of water—taking the stranger to be some relative or friend of the porter's. He forced a little into her mouth—the maid loosened her bonnet-string, and, after a few minutes, she uttered a deep sigh, and her consciousness returned.

"Don't hurry yourself, Miss—*Ma'am*, I mean," stammered the porter, in a low tone—"You can stay here a little—I don't think any one 's stirring but us servants—you see, ma'am, though I suppose you know—my poor mistress"——She shook her head, and sobbed.

"Yes, Joseph, I know it!—Did she—did she—die easily?" enquired Mrs. Elliott, in a faint whisper, grasping his hand.

"Yes, ma'am," he answered, in a low tone, "poor lady, she 'd been so long ailing, that no doubt death wasn't any thing partic'lar to her, like—and so she went out at last like the snuff of a candle, as one might say—poor old soul!—we 'd none of us—not my master even—heard the sound of her voice for months, not to say years even!"

"And my—my father—how does *he*——"

"Why he takes on about it, ma'am, certainly—but, you see, he 's been so long expecting of it!"

"Do you think, Joseph," said Mrs. Elliott, hardly able to make herself heard—"that—that my father would be *very*—very angry—if he knew I was here—would he—see me?"

"Lord, ma'am!" exclaimed the porter, alarm overspreading his features—"It 's not possible!—you can't think how stern he is!—You should have heard what orders he gave us all about keeping you out of the house! I know it 's a dreadful hard case, ma'am," he continued, wiping a tear from his eye, "and many, and many 's the time we 've all cried in the kitchen about—hush!" he stopped, and looked towards the stairs apprehensively—"never mind, ma'am—it 's nobody! But won't you

come down and sit in the housekeeper's room? I'm sure the good old soul will rather like to see you—and then, you know, you can slip out of the area gate, and be gone in no time!"

"No, Joseph," replied Mrs. Elliott, with as much energy as her weakness would admit of, "I will wait outside the street-door, if you think there is any danger—while you go and get this letter taken up stairs, and say I am waiting for an answer!" He took the letter, held it in his hand hesitatingly—and shook his head.

"Oh, take it, good Joseph!" said Mrs. Elliott, with a look that would have softened a heart of stone—"It is only to ask for mourning for my mother! I have no money to purchase any!" His eyes filled with tears.

"My poor dear young mistress!" he faltered—his lip quivered, and he paused—"It 's more than my place is worth—but—I 'll take it, nevertheless—that I will, come what will, ma'am! See if I don't! You see, ma'am," dropping his voice, and looking towards the staircase, "it isn't so much the old gentleman, after all, neither—but it 's—it 's—Miss Gubbley that I 'm afraid of! It is she, in my mind, that keeps him so cruel hard against you! She has it all her own way here! You should see how she orders us servants about, ma'am—and has her eyes into every thing that 's going on—But—I 'll go and take the letter any how—and don't you go out of doors, unless you hear me cry—'Hem!'—on the stairs!" She promised to attend to this hint, as did also the female servant whom he left with her, and Joseph disappeared. The mention of Miss Gubbley excited the most painful and disheartening thoughts in the mind of Mrs. Elliott. Possibly it was now the design of this woman to strike a grand blow—and force herself into the place so recently vacated by poor Mrs. Hillary! Mrs. Elliott's heart beat fast, after she had waited for some minutes in agonising anxiety and suspense, as she heard the footsteps of Joseph hastily descending the stairs.

"Well, Joseph,"—she whispered, looking eagerly at him.

"I can't get to see master, ma'am, though I've tried—I have indeed, ma'am! I thought it would be so! Miss Gubbley has been giving it me, ma'am—she says it will cost me my place to dare to do such an *oudacious* thing again—and I told her you

was below here, ma'am, and she might see you—but she tossed her head, and said it was of a piece with all your other shameful behaviour to your poor broken-hearted father—she did, ma'am"—Mrs. Elliott began to sob bitterly—"and she wouldn't on any account whatsoever have him shocked at such a sad time as this—and that she knows it would be no use your coming"—his voice quivered—"and she says, as how"—he could hardly go on—"you should have thought of all this long ago—and that only a month ago she heard master say it was all your own fault if you came to ruin—and as you 'd made your bed you must lie on it—her very words, ma'am—but she 's sent you a couple of guineas, ma'am, on condition that you don't on no account trouble master again—and—and"—he continued, his tears overflowing—"I've been so bold as to make it *three*, ma'am—and I hope it's no offence, ma'am, me being but a servant," trying to force something wrapped up in paper into the hand of Mrs. Elliott, who had listened motionless and in dead silence to all he had been saying.

"Joseph!"—at length she exclaimed, in a very low but distinct and solemn tone, stretching out her hands—"if you do not wish to see me die—help me, help me—to my knees!" And with his assistance, and that of the female servant, she sunk gently down upon her knees upon the floor, where he partly supported her. She slowly clasped her hands together upon her bosom, and looked upwards—her eye was tearless, and an awful expression settled upon her motionless features. Joseph involuntarily fell upon his knees beside her, shaking like an aspen-leaf—his eyes fixed instinctively upon hers—and the sobs of several of the servants, who had stolen silently to the top of the kitchen stairs to gaze at this strange scene, were the only sounds that were audible. After having remained in this position for several minutes, she rose from her knees slowly and in silence.

"When will my mother be buried?" she presently enquired.

"Next Saturday," whispered Joseph, "at two o'clock."

"Where?"

"At St. ——'s, ma'am."

"Farewell, Joseph! You have been very kind," said she, rising, and moving slowly to the door.

"Won't you let me get you a little of something warm, ma'am? You do look so bad, ma'am, so pale—and I'll fetch it from down stairs in half a minute."

"No, Joseph—I am better!—and Mr. Elliott is waiting for me at the outside."

"Poor gentleman!" sobbed Joseph, turning his head aside, that he might dash a tear from his eye. He strove again to force into her hand the paper containing the three guineas, but she refused.

"No, Joseph—I am very destitute, but yet—Providence will not let me starve. I cannot take it from *you;* hers I will not—I ought not!"

With this, the door was opened; and, with a firmer step than she had entered the house, she quitted it. Her husband, who was standing anxiously at one or two doors' distance, rushed up to her, and, with tremulous and agitated tone and gestures, enquired the result of her application, and, placing his arm around her—for he felt how heavily she leaned against him—gently led her towards home. He listened with the calmness of despair to her narrative of what had taken place. "Then there is no hope for us THERE," he muttered through his half-closed lips.

"But there *is* hope, dearest, with Him who invites the weary and heavy laden—who seems to have withdrawn from us, but has not forsaken us," replied his wife, tenderly, and with unwonted cheerfulness in her manner—"I feel—I know—he tells me that he will not suffer us to sink in the deep waters! He heard my prayer, Henry—and he will answer it, wisely and well! Let us hasten home, dearest. Our little Henry will be uneasy, and trouble Mrs. ——." Elliott listened to her in moody silence. His darkening features told not of the peace and resignation Heaven had shed into the troubled bosom of his wife, but too truly betokened the gloom and despair within. He suspected that his wife's reason was yielding to the long-continued assaults of sorrow; and thought of her approaching sufferings with an involuntary shudder, and sickened as he entered the scene of them—his wretched lodgings. She clasped their smiling child with cheerful affection to her bosom; *he* kissed him—but coldly—absently—as it were mechanically. Placing upon his forehead

the silk shade which my wife had sent to him, at my request, the day before—as well to relieve his eyes, as to conceal their troubled expression, he leaned against the table at which he took his seat, and thought with perfect horror upon their circumstances.

Scarce 20*l.* now remained of the 600*l.* with which they were married; his wife's little earnings were to be of course for a while suspended; he was prohibited, at the peril of blindness, from the only species of employment he could obtain; the last ray of hope concerning Hillary's reconciliation was extinguished; —and all this when their expenses were on the eve of being doubled—or trebled—when illness—or death—

It was well for Mrs. Elliott that her husband had placed that silk shade upon his forehead!

During his absence the next morning at the Ophthalmic Infirmary, whither, at my desire, he went twice a-week to receive the advice of Mr. ——, the eminent oculist, I called and seized the opportunity of placing in Mrs. Elliott's hands, with unspeakable satisfaction, the sum of 40*l.* which my good wife had chiefly collected among her friends; and as Mrs. Elliott read, or rather attempted to read, for her eyes were filled with tears, the affectionate note written to her by my wife, who begged that she would send her little boy to our house till she should have recovered from her confinement, she clasped her hands together, and exclaimed—"Has not God heard my prayers!—Dearest doctor! Heaven will reward you! What news for my poor heart-broken husband when he returns home from the Infirmary—weary and disheartened! * * * * *

"And now, doctor, shall I confide to you a plan I have formed?" said Mrs. Elliott, looking earnestly at me—"Don't try to persuade me against putting it into practice; for my mind is made up, and nothing can turn me from my purpose." I looked at her with surprise. "You know we have but this one room and the little closet—for what else is it?—where we sleep; and where must my husband and child be when I am confined? Besides, we cannot, even with all your noble kindness to us, afford to have proper—the most ordinary attendance." She paused —I listened anxiously.

"So—I've been thinking—could you not"—— she hesitated, struggling with violent emotion—"could you not get me admitted"—her voice trembled—"into—the Lying-in Hospital?"—I shook my head, unable at the moment to find utterance.

"It has cost me a struggle—Providence seems, however, to have led me to the thought! I shall there be no expense to my husband—and shall have, I understand, excellent attendance."

"My poor dear madam," I faltered, "you must forgive me—but I cannot bear to think of it."—In spite of my struggles, the swelling tears at length burst from my laden eyes. She buried her face in her handkerchief, and wept bitterly. "My husband can hear of me every day, and, with God's blessing upon us, perhaps in a month's time we may both meet in better health and spirits. And if—if—*if* it would not inconvenience Mrs.—— or yourself, to let my little Henry"—she could get no further, and burst again into a fit of passionate weeping. I promised her, in answer to her reiterated entreaties, after many remonstrances, that I would immediately take steps to ensure her an admission into the Lying-in Hospital at any moment she might require it.

"But, my dear madam—your husband—Mr. Elliott—depend upon it he will never hear of all this—he will never permit it—I feel perfectly certain."

"Ah, doctor—I know he would not; but he shall not know any thing about my intentions till I am safely lodged in the—the hospital. I intend to leave, without his knowing where I am gone, some day this week—for I feel satisfied"—she paused, and trembled—"When he returns from the Infirmary on Friday he will find a letter from me, telling him all my little scheme, and may God incline him to forgive me for what I am doing. I know he loves me, however, too fondly to make me unhappy!"

The next morning my wife accompanied me to their lodgings, for the purpose of taking home with her little Elliott. A sad scene it was—but Elliott, whom his wife had easily satisfied of the prudence of thus disposing of the child during the period of her confinement, bore it manfully. He carried the child down to my carriage, and resigned him into the hands of my wife and a servant, after many fond caresses, with an air of melancholy

resolution; promising to call daily and see him while on his visit at my house. I strove to console him under this temporary separation from his child, and to impress upon him the necessity of absolute quiet and repose, in order to give due effect to the very active treatment under which he had been placed for the complaint in his eyes; this I did in order to prepare him for the second stroke meditated to be inflicted upon him on the ensuing Friday by his wife, and to reconcile him, by anticipation as it were, to their brief separation. When once the decisive step had been taken, I felt satisfied that he would speedily see the propriety of it.

It was wonderful to see how Mrs. Elliott, during the interval between this day and the Friday appointed for her entrance into the Lying-in Hospital, sustained her spirits. Her manner increased in tenderness towards her husband, who evinced a corresponding energy of sympathy and affection towards her. His anxieties had been to a considerable extent allayed by the seasonable addition to his funds already spoken of; but he expressed an occasional surprise at the absence of any preparations for the event which both of them believed to be so near at hand.

On the Friday morning, about half an hour after her husband had set out for the Ophthalmic Infirmary, as usual, a hackney-coach drew up to the door of his lodgings, with a female attendant, sent by my directions from the Lying-in Hospital. I also made my appearance within a few minutes of the arrival of the coach: and poor Mrs. Elliott, after having carefully arranged and disposed of the few articles of her own apparel which she intended to leave behind her, and given the most anxious and repeated instructions to the woman of the house to be attentive to Mr. Elliott in her absence—sat down and shed many tears as she laid upon the table a letter, carefully sealed, and addressed to her husband, containing the information of her departure and destination. When her agitation had somewhat subsided, she left the room—perhaps, she felt *for ever*—entered into the coach, and was soon safely lodged in the Lying-in Hospital.

The letter to her husband was as follows—for the melancholy events, which will presently be narrated, brought this, with other documents, into my possession.

"MY SWEET LOVE,

"The hour of my agony is approaching; and Providence has pointed out to me a place of refuge. I cannot, dearest Henry—I cannot think of adding to your sufferings by the sight of mine! When all is over—as I trust it will be soon, and happily—then we shall be re-united, and God grant us happier days! Oh, do not be grieved or angry, Henry, at the step I am taking. I have done it for the best—it will be for the best, depend upon it. Dr. —— will tell you how skilfully and kindly they treat their patients at the Lying-in Hospital, to which I am going. Oh, Henry! you are the delight of my soul! The more grief and bitterness we have seen together, surely the more do we love one another. *Oh how I love you!* How I prayed in the night while you, dearest, were sleeping—that the Almighty would bless you and our little Henry, and be merciful to *me*, for your sakes, and bring us all together again! I shall pray for you, my love—my own love! every hour that we are away! Bear up a little longer, Harry! God has not deserted us—he will not—he cannot, if we do not desert him. I leave you, dearest, my Bible and prayer-book—*oh, do read them!* Kiss my little Harry, in my name, every day. How kind are Dr. ——, and Mrs. ——! Go out and enjoy the fresh air, and do not sit fretting at home, love, nor try your eyes with reading or writing till I come back. I can hardly lay by my pen, but the coach is come for me, and I must tear myself away. Farewell, then, my dear, dear, darling Henry; but only for a little while. Your doating wife, MARY.

"P.S.—The socks I have been knitting for Harry are in the drawer near the window. You had better take them to Dr. ——'s to-morrow, as I forgot to send them with Harry in the bustle of his going, and he will want them. Dr. —— says you can come and see me every day before I am taken ill. Do come."

I called in the evening—according to the promise I had made to Mrs. Elliott—on her husband, to see how he bore the discovery of his wife's sudden departure.

"How is Mr. Elliott?" I enquired of the woman of the house, who opened the door. "Is he at home?"

"Why, yes—but he 's in a sad way, sir, indeed, about Mrs. Elliott's going. He 's eaten nothing all day."

He was sitting at a table when I entered, with a solitary candle, and Mrs. Elliott's letter lying open before him.

"Oh! doctor, is not this worse than death?" he exclaimed. "Am I not left alone to be the prey of Satan?"

"Come, come, Mr. Elliott, moderate your feelings! Learn the lesson your incomparable wife has taught you—patience and resignation."

"It is a heavenly lesson. But can a fiend learn it?" he replied, vehemently, in a tone and with an air that quite startled me. "Here I am left alone by God and man to be the sport of devils, and I AM!—What curse is there that has not fallen, or is falling upon me? I feel assured," he continued, gloomily, "that my Mary is taken from me for ever. Oh, do not tell me otherwise. I feel—I know it! I have brought ruin upon her! I have brought her to beggary by an insane, a wicked attachment! The curses of disobedience to parents are upon both of us! Yet our misery might have touched any heart except that of her fiendish father. Ah! he buries her mother to-morrow! To-morrow, then, I will be there! The earth shall not fall upon her before he looks upon me! How I will make the old man shake beside the grave he must soon drop into!"—He drew a long breath—"Let him curse me!—Curse her—Curse us both!—Curse our child! Then and there——"

"*The curse causeless shall not come,*" I interrupted.

"Ay, causeless! That 's the thing! Causeless!" He paused. "Forgive me," he added, after a heavy sigh, resuming his usual manner; "doctor, I 've been *raving*, and can you wonder at it? Poor Mary's letter (here it is) has almost killed me! I have been to the place where she is, but I dared not go in to see her. Oh, doctor! *will* she be taken care of?" suddenly seizing my hand with convulsive energy.

"The very greatest care will be taken of her—the greatest skill in London will be instantly at her command in case of the slightest necessity for it—as well as every possible comfort and convenience that her situation can require. If it will be any consolation to you, I assure you I intend visiting her myself every

day."—And by these means I at length succeeded in restoring something like calmness to him. The excitement occasioned by his unexpected discovery of his wife's absence, and its touching reason, had been aggravated by the unfavourable opinion concerning his sight which had been that morning expressed—alas, I feared, but too justly—by the able and experienced oculist under whose care he was placed. He had in much alarm heard Mr. —— ask him several questions respecting peculiar and secret symptoms and sensations about his eyes, which he was forced to answer in the affirmative; and the alarming effect of these enquiries was not dissipated by the cautious replies of Mr. —— to his questions as to the chances of ultimate recovery. I assured him that nothing on earth could so effectually serve him as the cultivation of calm and composed habits of mind; for that the affection of his eyes depended almost entirely upon the condition of his nervous system. I got him to promise me that he would abandon his wild and useless purpose of attending the funeral of Mrs. Hillary—said I would call upon him, accompanied by his little son, about noon the next day, and also bring him tidings concerning Mrs. Elliott.

Mrs. Elliott was taken ill on Sunday, about midnight; and, after a somewhat severe and protracted labour, was delivered on Monday evening of a child, that died a few minutes after its birth. Having directed the people at the hospital to summon me directly Mrs. Elliott was taken ill, I was in attendance upon her within an hour after her illness had commenced. I sent a messenger on Monday morning to Mr. Elliott, according to the promise I had given him immediately to send him the earliest information, with an entreaty that he would remain at home all day; to be in readiness to receive a visit from me. He came down, however, to the hospital almost immediately after receiving my message; and walked to and fro before the institution, making anxious enquiries every ten minutes or quarter of an hour how his wife went on, and received ready, and often encouraging, answers. When I quitted her for the night, about an hour after her delivery, leaving her much exhausted, but, as I too confidently supposed, out of danger, I earnestly entreated Mr. Elliott, who continued before the gates of the hospital in a state of the

highest excitement, to return home—but in vain; and I left him with expressions of severe displeasure, assuring him that his conduct was absurd and useless—nay, criminally dangerous to himself. "What will become of your sight, Mr. Elliott—pray think of *that!*—if you will persist in working yourself up to this dreadful pitch of nervous excitement? I do assure you that you are doing yourself every hour mischief which—which it may require months, if not years, to remedy—and is it kind to her you love—to those whom you ought to consult—whose interests are dependent upon yourself—thus to throw away the chances of recovery? Pray, Mr. Elliott, listen, listen to reason, and return home! He made me no reply, but wept, and I left, hoping that what I had said would soon produce the desired effect.

About four o'clock in the morning, I was awoke by a violent ringing of the bell and knocking at the door; and, on hastily looking out of the window, beheld Mr. Elliott.

"What is the matter there?" I enquired. "Is it you, Mr. Elliott?"

"Oh doctor, doctor—for God's sake come!—My wife, my wife! She's dying! They have told me so! Come, doctor, oh come!" Though I had been exceedingly fatigued with the labours of the preceding day, this startling summons soon dissipated my drowsiness, and in less than five minutes I was by his side. We ran almost all the way to the nearest coach-stand: and, on reaching the hospital, found that there existed but too much ground for apprehension; for about two o'clock very alarming symptoms of profuse hæmorrhage made their appearance; and when I reached her bed-side, a little after four o'clock, I saw, in common with the experienced resident accoucheur, who was also present, that her life was indeed trembling in the balance. While I sate watching, with feelings of melancholy interest and alarm, her snowy inanimate countenance, a tap on my shoulder from one of the female attendants attracted my eye to the door, where the chief matron of the establishment was standing. She beckoned me out of the room; and I noiselessly stepped out after her.

"The husband of this poor lady," said Mrs. ——, "is in a dreadful state, doctor, in the street. The porter has sent up

word that he fears the gentleman is going mad, and will be attempting to break open the gates—that he insists upon being shown at once into his wife's room, or at least within the house! Pray oblige me, doctor, by going down and trying to pacify him! This will never do, you know—the other patients"—I hastened down stairs, and stepped quickly across the yard. My heart yearned towards the poor distracted being who stood outside the iron gates, with his arms stretched towards me through the bars.

"Oh say, is she alive? Is she alive?" he cried, with a lamentable voice.

"She *is*, Mr. Elliott—but really——"

"Oh, *is* she alive? Are you telling me truly? Is she indeed alive?"

"Yes, yes, Mr. Elliott—but if you don't cease to make such a dreadful disturbance, your voice may reach her ear—and that would be instant death—indeed it would."

"I will! I will—but is she indeed alive? Don't deceive me!"

"This is the way he's been going on all night;" whispered the watchman, who had just stepped up.

"Mr. Elliott, I tell you, truly, in the name of God, your wife is living—and I have not given up hope of her recovery."

"Oh Mary! Mary! Mary! Oh come to me, my Mary! You said that you would return to me."

"Hadn't I better take him away, sir?" said the watchman. "The porter says he 'll be wakening all the women in the hospital—shall I?"

"Let me stay—let me stay! I'll give you all I have in the world! I'll give you forty pounds—I will, I will"—cried the unfortunate husband, clinging to the bars, and looking imploringly at me.

"Do not interfere—do not touch him, sir," said I to the watchman.

"Thank you! God bless you," gasped the wretched sufferer, extending his hands towards mine, and wringing them convulsively; then, turning to the watchman, he added, in a lower tone, the most piteous I ever heard—"Don't take me away! My wife is here; she's dying—I *can't* go away—but I'll not make

any more noise!—Hush! hush! there is some one coming!"—A person approached from within the building, and, whispering ew hurried words in my ear, retired. "Mr. Elliott, shake hands with me," said I; "Mrs. Elliott is reviving! I told you I had hope!—The accoucheur has this instant sent me word that he thinks the case is taking a favourable turn."—He sunk down suddenly on his knees in silence; then grasped my hands through the bars, and shook them convulsively. In the fervour of his frantic feeling, he turned to the watchman, grasped his hands, and shook them.

"Hush! hush"—he gasped—"Don't speak! It will disturb her! A single sound may kill her—Ah"——he looked with agonised apprehension at the mail-coach, which that moment rattled rapidly and loudly by. At length he became so much calmer, that, after pledging myself to return to him shortly, especially if any unfavourable change should take place, I withdrew, and repaired to the chamber where lay the poor unconscious creature—the subject of her husband's wild and dreadful anxieties. I found that I had not been misinformed; and though Mrs. Elliott lay in the most precarious situation possible, with no sign of life in her pallid countenance, and no pulse discernible at her wrist, we had reason for believing that a favourable change had taken place. After remaining in silence by her side for about a quarter of an hour, during which she seemed asleep, I took my departure, and conveyed the delightful intelligence to the poor sufferer without, that his hopes were justified by the situation in which I had left my sweet patient. I succeeded in persuading him to accompany me home, and restoring him to a little composure: but the instant that he had swallowed a hasty cup of coffee, without waiting even to see his little boy, who was being dressed to come down as usual to breakfast, he left the house and returned to the hospital, where I found him, as before, on driving up about twelve o'clock, but walking calmly to and fro before the gates. What anguish was written in his features! But a smile passed over them—a joyful air, as he told me, before I could quit my carriage, that all was still going on well. It was so, I ascertained; and on returning from the hospital, I almost forced him into my carriage, and drove off to his lodgings,

where I stayed till he had got into bed, and had solemnly promised me to remain there till I called in the evening.

For three days Mrs. Elliott continued in the most critical circumstances; during which her husband was almost every other hour at the hospital, and at length so wearied every one with his anxious and incessant inquiries, that they would hardly give him civil answers any longer. Had I not twice bled him with my own hand, and myself administered to him soothing and lowering medicines, he would certainly, I think, have gone raving mad. On the fifth day Mrs. Elliott was pronounced out of danger, but continued, of course, in a very exhausted state. Her first inquiries were about her husband, then her little Henry: and, on receiving a satisfactory answer, a sweet sad smile stole over her features, and her feeble fingers gently compressed mine. Before I quitted her, she asked whether her husband might be permitted to see her—I of course answered in the negative. A tear stole down her cheek, but she did not attempt to utter a syllable.

*Friday.* This morning my wife called, at my suggestion, to see Mrs. Elliott, accompanied by her little boy, whom I had perceived she was pining to see. I thought they might meet without affording ground for uneasiness as to the result.

"My little Harry!" exclaimed a low soft voice as my wife and child were silently ushered into the room where lay Mrs. Elliott, wasted almost to a shadow, her face and hands—said my wife—white as the lily. "Come, love—kiss me!" she faintly murmured; and my wife brought the child to the bed-side, and, lifting him upon her knee, inclined his face towards his mother. She feebly placed her arm around his neck, and pressed him to her bosom.

"Let me see his face!" she whispered, removing her arm.

She gazed tenderly at him for some minutes; the child looking first at her and then at my wife with mingled fear and surprise.

"*How like his father!*" she murmured—"kiss me again, love! —Don't be afraid of your poor mother, Harry!" Her eyes filled with tears. "Am I so altered?" said she to my wife, who stammered yes and no in one breath.

"Has he been a good boy?"

"Very—very" replied my wife, turning aside her head, un-

able for a moment to look either mother or son in the face. Mrs. Elliott perceived my wife's emotion, and her chill fingers gently grasped her hand.

"Does he say his prayers?—you've not forgotten *that*, Harry?"

The child, whose little breast was beginning to heave, shook his head, and lisped a faint—"No, mamma!"

"God bless thee, my darling!" exclaimed his mother, in a low tone, closing her eyes—"He will not desert thee—nor th parents!——*He feeds the young ravens when they cry!*" She paused, and the tears trembled through her almost transparent eyelids. My wife, who had with the utmost difficulty restrained her feelings, leaned over the poor sufferer, pressed her lips to her forehead, and gently taking the child with her, stepped hastily from the room. On my calling, she expressed herself very grateful to me for the care which she said we had evidently taken of her boy—"and how like he grows to his poor father!"—she added, "Oh! doctor—when may I see *him*?—Do—dear doctor—let us meet, if it be but for a moment! Oh, how I long to see him! I will not be agitated! It will do me more good than all the medicine in this building!"

"In a few days' time, my dear madam, I assure you——"

"Why not to-morrow?—oh, if you knew the good that one look of his would do me—he does not look ill?" she inquired suddenly.

"He—he looks certainly rather harassed on your account; but in other respects he is——"

"Promise me—let me see for myself; oh, bring him with you! —I—I—I own I could not bear to see him *alone*—but in *your* presence—do, dear doctor! promise!—I shall sleep so sweetly to-night if you will."

Her looks—her tender murmuring voice, overcame me; and I promised to bring Mr. Elliott with me some time on the morrow. I bade her good night.

"Remember, doctor!" she whispered, as I rose to go.

"I will!"—said I, and quitted the room, already almost repenting of the rash promise I had made. But who could have resisted her?

Sweet soul! what was to become of thee? Bred up in the lap of luxury, and accustomed to have every wish gratified, every want anticipated—what kind of scene awaited thee on returning to thy humble lodgings—

> Where hopeless Anguish pours her groan,
> And lonely Want retired to die?

For was it not so? What miracle was to save them from starvation? Full of such melancholy reflections, I walked home, resolving to leave no stone unturned on their behalf, and pledging myself and wife that the forty pounds we had already collected for the Elliott's, from among our benevolent friends, should be raised to a hundred, however great might be the deficiency we made up ourselves!

*Saturday.* I was preparing to pay some early visits to distant patients, and arranging so as to take Mr. Elliott with me on my return, which I calculated would be about two o'clock, to pay the promised visit to Mrs. Elliott, when my servant brought me a handful of letters which had that moment been left by the twopenny postman. I was going to cram them all into my pocket, and read them in the carriage, when my eye was attracted by one of them much larger than the rest, sealed with a black seal, and the address in Elliott's hand-writing. I instantly resumed my seat; and placing the other letters in my pocket, proceeded to break the seal, with some trepidation—which increased to a sickening degree when four letters fell out—all of them sealed with black, and in Elliott's hand-writing, and addressed respectively to—"Jacob Hillary, Esq."—"Mrs. Elliott"—"Henry Elliott,"—and "Dr. ——" (myself). I sat for a minute or two, with this terrible array before me, scarce daring to breathe, or to trust myself with my thoughts—when my wife entered, leading in her constant companion, little Elliott, to take their leave, as usual, before I set out for the day. The sight of "Henry Elliott, to whom one of these portentous letters was addressed, overpowered me. My wife, seeing me discomposed, was beginning to inquire the reason, when I rose, and with gentle force put her out of the room and bolted the door, hurriedly telling her that I had just received unpleasant accounts concerning one or

two of my patients. With trembling hands I opened the letter which was addressed to me, and read, with infinite consternation, as follows:—

"When you are reading these few lines, kind doctor! I shall be sweetly sleeping the sleep of death. All will be over: there will be one wretch the less upon the earth.

"God, before whom I shall be standing face to face, while you read this letter, will, I hope, have mercy upon me, and forgive me for appearing before Him uncalled for. Amen!

"But I could not live. I felt blindness—the last curse—descending upon me—blindness and beggary. I saw my wife broken-hearted. Nothing but misery and starvation before her and her child.

"O, has she not loved me with a noble love? And yet it is thus I leave her! But she knows how through life I have returned her love, and she will hereafter find that love alone led me to take this dreadful step.

"Grievous has been the misery she has borne for my sake. I thought, in marrying her, that I might have overcome the difficulties which threatened us—that I might have struggled successfully at least for our bread; but HE ordered otherwise, and it *has been in vain for me to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows.*

"Why did I leave life? Because I know, as if a voice from Heaven had told me, that my death will reconcile Mary and her father. It is me alone whom he hates, and her only on my account. When I shall be gone, he will receive her to his arms, and she and my son will be happy.

"Oh, my God! that I shall never see the face of Mary again, or —— But presently she will look at our son, and she will revive.

"I entreat you, as in the name of the dead—it is a voice from the grave—to be yourself the bearer of this news to Mary, when, and as you may think fit. Give her this letter, and also give, yourself, to Mr. Hillary the letter which bears his dreadful name upon it. I know, I feel, that it will open his heart, and he will receive them to his arms.

"I have written also a few lines to my son. Ah, my boy, your

father will be mouldered into dust before you will understand what I have written. Grieve for your unfortunate father, but do not—disown him!

"As for you, best of men, my only *friend*, farewell! Forgive all the trouble I have given. God reward you! You will be in my latest thoughts. I have written to you last.

"Now I have done. I am calm; the bitterness of death is past. Farewell! The grave—the darkness of death is upon my soul—but I have no fear. To-night, before this candle shall have burnt out—at midnight——Oh, Mary! Henry!—Shall we ever meet again? H. E."

I read this letter over half-a-dozen times, for every paragraph pushed the preceding one out of my memory. Then I took up mechanically and opened the letter addressed to his son. It contained a large lock of his father's hair, and the following verses,* written in a great straggling hand:—

"*I have wished for death: wherefore do I not call for my son?*

"*My son, when I am dead, bury me; and despise not thy mother, but honour her all the days of thy life, and do that which shall please her, and grieve her not.*

"*Remember, my son, that she saw many dangers for thee, when thou wast in her womb; and when she is dead, bury her by me in one grave.*"

"Thus, on the point of death, writes thy father to his beloved son. REMEMBER! HENRY ELLIOTT."

As soon as I had somewhat recovered the shock occasioned by the perusal of these letters, I folded them all up, stepped hastily into my carriage, and, postponing all my other visits, drove off direct to the lodgings of Mr. Elliott. The woman of the house was standing at the door, talking earnestly with one or two persons.

"Where is Mr. Elliott?" I enquired, leaping out of the carriage.

"That's what we want to know, sir," replied the woman, very pale. "He must have gone out very late last night, sir—and hasn't been back since; for when I looked into his room this morning to ask about breakfast, it was empty."

* From the Apocrypha. Tobit, ch. iv. 2, 3, 4.

"Did you observe any thing particular in his appearance last night?" I enquired, preparing to ascend the little staircase.

"Yes, sir, very wild-like! And about eight or nine o'clock, he comes to the top of the stairs, and calls out, 'Mrs. ——, did you hear that noise? Didn't you see something?' 'Lord, sir,' said I, in a taking, he spoke so sudden, 'no! there wa'n't any sound whatsoever!'—so he went into his room, and shut the door, and I never seed him since."

I hastened to his room. A candlestick, its candle burnt down to the socket, stood on the little table at which he generally sat, together with a pen or two, an inkstand, black wax, a sheet of paper, and a Bible open at the place from which he had copied the words addressed to his son. The room was apparently just as its unfortunate and frantic occupant had quitted it. I opened the table-drawer; it was full of paper which had been covered with writing, and was now torn into small fragments. One half sheet was left, full of strange incoherent expressions, apparently forming part of a prayer, and evincing, alas! how fearfully the writer's reason was disturbed! But where was poor Elliott? What mode of death had he selected?

At first I thought of instantly advertising and describing his person, and issuing hand-bills about the neighbourhood; but at length determined to wait till the Monday's newspapers made their appearance—some one of which might contain intelligence concerning him which might direct my movements. Alas, almost the first paragraph that fell under my hurried eye, in scanning over the papers of Monday, was the following:—

"On Saturday, about 8 o'clock, some labourers discovered the body of a man, of respectable appearance, apparently about thirty years old, floating, without a hat, in the New River. It was immediately taken out of the water, but life seemed to have been for some hours extinct. One or two letters were found upon his person, but the MS. too much spread and blotted with the water to afford any clue to the identity of the unfortunate person. The body lies at the Red Boar public house, where a coroner's inquest is summoned for to-day, at 12 o'clock."

I drove off to the place mentioned in the paragraph, and arrived there just as the jury was assembling. There was a con-

siderable crowd about the doors. I sent in my card; and, stating that I believed I could identify the body for which the inquest was summoned, I was allowed to view the corpse, and ushered at once into the room where it lay.

I wish Mr. Hillary could have entered that room with me, and have stood beside me, as I stepped shudderingly forward, and perceived that I was looking upon—HIS VICTIM! The body lay with its wet clothes undisturbed, just as it had been taken out of the water. The damp hair—the eyes wide open—the hands clenched, as if with the agonies of death.

I could bear it no longer, and rushed from the room in an agony! After drinking a glass of water, I recovered my self-possession sufficiently to make my appearance in the jury-room; where I deposed to such facts—carefully concealing only, for Mrs. Elliott and her son's sake, the causes which led to the commission of the fatal act—as satisfied the jury that the deceased had destroyed himself while in a state of mental derangement; and they returned their verdict accordingly.

I have had to encounter in my time many, very many trying and terrible scenes; but I never approached any with so much apprehension and anxiety as the one now cast upon me. Fortifying myself with a few glasses of wine, I put poor Elliott's letter to Mr. Hillary in my pocket-book, and drove off for —— Square. I reached the house about eight o'clock. My servant, by my direction, thundered impetuously at the door—a startling summons I intended it to be! The porter drew open the door almost before my servant had removed his hand from the knocker.

"Is Mr. Hillary at home?" I enquired, stepping hurriedly from my carriage, with the fearful letter in my hand. "He is, sir," said the man, with a flurried air—"But—he—he—does not receive company, sir, since my mistress's death."

"Take my card to him, sir. My name is Dr. ——. I must see Mr. Hillary instantly."

I waited in the hall for a few moments, and then received a message, requesting me to walk into the back drawing-room. There I saw Miss Gubbley, as the servant told me—alone, and dressed in deep mourning. What I had heard of this woman inspired me with the utmost contempt and hatred for her. What

a countenance! Meanness, malice, cunning, and sycophancy seemed struggling for the ascendant in its expression.

"Pardon me, madam—my business," said I, peremptorily, "is not with you, but with Mr. Hillary. Him I must see, and immediately."

"Dr. ——, what *is* the matter?" she inquired, with mingled anger and anxiety in her countenance.

"I have a communication, madam, for Mr. Hillary's private ear—I *must* see him; I insist upon seeing him immediately."

"This is strange conduct, sir—really," said Miss Gubbley, in an impudent manner, but her features becoming every moment paler and paler. "Have you not already——"

I unceremoniously pushed the malignant little parasite aside, opened the folding doors, and stepped instantly into the presence of the man I at once desired and dreaded to see. He sat on the sofa, in the attitude and with the expression of a man who had been suddenly aroused from sleep.

"Dr. ——!" he exclaimed, with an astonished and angry air —"Your servant, doctor! What 's the meaning of all this?"

"I am sorry to intrude upon you, Mr. Hillary—but—I have a dreadful duty to perform"—pointing to the letter I held, and turning towards him its black seal. He saw it. He seemed rather startled or alarmed; motioned me, with a quick anxious bow, to take a seat, and resumed his own. "Excuse me, Mr. Hillary—but we must be *alone*," said I, pointing to Miss Gubbley, who had followed me with a suspicious and insolent air, exclaiming, as she stepped hastily towards Mr. Hillary—"Don't suffer this conduct, sir! It 's very incorrect—very, sir."

"We *must* be alone, sir," I repeated, calmly and peremptorily, or I shall retire at once. You would never cease to repent *that*, sir;" and Mr. Hillary, as if he had suddenly discovered some strange meaning in my eye, motioned the pertinacious intruder to the door, and she reluctantly obeyed. I drew my chair near Mr. Hillary, who seemed, by this time, thoroughly alarmed.

"Will you read this letter, sir?" said I, handing it to him. He took it into his hand; looked first at the direction, then at the seal, and lastly at me, in silence.

"Do you know that hand-writing, sir?" I enquired.

He stammered an answer in the negative.

"Look at it, sir, again. You ought to know it—you *must* know it well." He laid down the letter; fumbled in his waistcoat-pocket for his glasses; placed them with infinite trepidation upon his forehead, and again took the letter into his hands, which shook violently; and his sight was so confused with agitation, that I saw he could make nothing of it.

"It seems—it appears to be—a man's hand, sir. Whose is it? What is it about? What 's the matter?" he exclaimed, looking at me over his glasses with a frightened stare.

"I have attended, sir, a coroner's inquest this morning——" The letter dropped instantly from Mr. Hillary's shaking hand upon the floor; his lips slowly opened.

"The writer of that letter, sir, was found drowned on Saturday last," I continued, slowly, looking steadfastly at him, and feeling myself grow paler every moment—"This day I saw the body—stretched upon a shutter at an inn. Oh, those awful eyes! That hair, matted and muddy! Those clenched hands—Horror filled my soul as I looked at all this, and thought of YOU!"

His lips moved, he uttered a few unintelligible sounds, and his face, suddenly bedewed with perspiration, assumed one of the most ghastly expressions that a human countenance could exhibit. I remained silent, nor did he speak; but the big drops rolled from his forehead and fell upon the floor. In the pier-glass opposite, to which my eye was attracted by seeing some moving figure reflected in it, I beheld the figure of Miss Gubbley; who having been no doubt listening at the door, could no longer subdue her terrified curiosity, and stole into the room on tip-toe, and stood terror-stricken behind my chair. Her presence seemed to restore Mr. Hillary to consciousness.

"Take her away—go away—go—go"—he murmured, and I led her, unresisting, from the room, and, to be secured from her further intrusion, bolted both the doors.

"You had better read the letter, sir," said I, with a deep sigh, resuming my seat; his eyes remained riveted on me.

"I—I—I—*cannot*, sir!" he stammered. A long pause ensued "If—she—had but called"——he gasped, "but once—or sent—

after her—her mother's death"——and with a long groan he leaned forward, and fell against me.

"She did call, sir. She came the day after her mother's death," said I, shaking my head sorrowfully.

"No, she didn't," he replied, suddenly looking at me with a stupified air.

"Then her visit was cruelly *concealed* from you, sir. Poor creature, I know she called."

He rose slowly from the prostrate posture in which he had remained for the last few moments, clenched his trembling fists, and shook them with impotent anger. Who—who," he muttered—"who dared—I—I—I'll ring the bell. I'll have all the——"

"Would you have really received her, then, sir, if you had known of her calling?"

His lips moved, he attempted in vain to utter an answer, and sobbed violently, covering his face with his hands.

"Come, Mr. Hillary, I see," said I, in a somewhat milder manner, "that the feelings of a FATHER are not utterly extinguished"—he burst into vehement weeping—"and I hope that—that—you may live to repent what you have done; to redress the wrongs you have committed! Your poor persecuted daughter, Mr. Hillary, is not dead." He uttered a sudden sharp cry that alarmed me; grasped my hands, and carrying them to his lips, kissed them in a kind of ecstasy.

"Tell me—say plainly—only say—that Mary is alive——"

"Well, then, sir, your daughter *is* alive, but——"

He fell upon his knees, and groaned "Oh God, I thank thee! I thank thee! How I thank thee!"

I waited till he had in some measure recovered from the ecstasy of emotion into which my words had thrown him, and assisted in loosening his shirt-collar and neck-handkerchief, which seemed to oppress him.

"*Who*—then"—he stammered—"who was—*found drowned*—the coroner's inquest——"

"Her poor broken-hearted husband, sir, who will be buried at my expense in a day or two."

He covered his face again with his hands, and cried bitterly.

"This letter was written by him to you, sir; and he sent it to

me only a few hours, it seems, before he destroyed himself, and commissioned me to deliver it to you. Is not his blood, sir, lying at your door?"

"Oh Lord! have mercy on me! Lord—Christ—forgive me! Lord, forgive a guilty old sinner," he groaned, sinking again on his knees, and, wringing his hands. "I—I AM his murderer! I feel—I know it!"

"Shall I read to you, sir, his last words?" said I.

"Yes, but—they 'll choke me. I can't bear them." He sunk back exhausted upon the sofa. I took up the letter, which had remained till then upon the floor since he had dropped it from his palsied grasp, and opening it, read with faltering accents the following:—

"For your poor dear daughter's sake, sir—who is now a widow and a beggar—abandon your fierce and cruel resentment. I know that I am the guilty cause of all her misery. I have suffered, and paid the full penalty of my sin! And I am, when you read this, amongst the dead.

"Forgive me, father of my beloved and suffering wife! Forgive me, as I forgive you, in this solemn moment, from my heart, whatever wrongs you may have done me!

"Let my death knock loudly at your heart's door, so that it may open and take in my suffering, perishing Mary—YOUR Mary, and our unoffending little one! I know it will! Heaven tells me that my sacrifice is accepted! I die full of grief but contented, in the belief that all will be well with the dear ones I leave behind me. God incline your heart to mercy! Farewell! So prays your unhappy, guilty son-in-law—HENRY ELLIOTT."

It was a long while before my emotion, almost blinding my eyes and choking my utterance, permitted me to conclude this melancholy letter. Mr. Hillary sat all the while aghast.

"The gallows is too good for me!" he gasped; "oh, what a monster! what a wretch have I been! Ay, I'll surrender! I know I 'm guilty! It's all my doing! I confess all! It was I—It was I put him in prison."—I looked darkly at him as he uttered these last words, and shook my head in silence.

"Ah! I see—I see you know it all! Come, then! Take me

away! Away with me to Newgate. Anywhere you like. I'll plead guilty!" He attempted to rise, but sank back again into his seat.

"But—*where's Mary*?" he gasped.

"Alas," I replied, "she does not yet know that she is a widow! that her child is an orphan! She has herself, poor meek soul, been lying for many days at the gates of death, and, even yet, her fate is more than doubtful!"

"Where is she? Let me know—tell me, or I shall die. Let me know where I may go and drop down at her feet, and ask her forgiveness!"

"She is in a common hospital, a lying-in hospital, sir, where she, a few days ago only, gave birth to a dead child, after enduring, for the whole time of her pregnancy, the greatest want and misery! She has worked her poor fingers to the bones, Mr. Hillary—she has slaved like a common servant for her child, her husband, and herself, and yet she has hardly found bread for them!"

"Oh! stay, stay, doctor. A common hospital! My daughter—a common hospital!" repeated Mr. Hillary, pressing his hand to his forehead, and staring vacantly at me.

"Yes, sir—a common hospital!—Where else could she go to? God be thanked, sir, for finding such resources, such places of refuge, for the poor and forsaken! She fled thither to escape starvation, and to avoid eating the bread scarce sufficient for her husband and her child! I have seen her enduring such misery as would have softened the heart of a fiend!—And, good God! how am I to tell her what has happened? How I shudder at the task that her dead husband has imposed upon me!—

"Tell her—tell her—conceal the death," he gasped; "and tell her first, that all 's forgiven, if she 'll accept my forgiveness, and forgive *me!* Tell her—be sure to tell her—that my whole fortune is hers and her child's.—Surely *that*——I will make my will afresh. Every halfpenny shall go to her and her child. It shall, so help me God!"

"Poor creature!" I exclaimed, bitterly, "can money heal thy broken heart?" I paused. "You may relent, Mr. Hillary, and receive your unhappy daughter into your house again, but, believe me, her heart will ie in her husband's grave!"

"Doctor, doctor! You are killing me!" he exclaimed, every feature writhing under the scourgings of remorse. "Tell me! only tell me what can I do more? This house—all I have, is hers, for the rest of her life. She may turn me into the streets. I'll live on bread and water, they shall roll in gold. But, oh, where is she! where is she? I'll send the carriage instantly." He rose, as if intending to ring the bell.

"No, no, Mr. Hillary; she must not be disturbed! She must remain at her present abode, under the roof of charity, where she lies—sweet being! humble and grateful among her sisters in suffering!"

"I—I'll give a thousand pounds to the charity—I will. I'll give a couple of thousands—so help me God, I will, And I'll give it in the name of a Repentant Old Sinner. Oh, I'll do every thing that a guilty wretch can do. But I *must* see my daughter! I must hear her blessed innocent lips say that she forgives me."

"Pause, sir," said I solemnly—"you know not that she will live to leave the hospital, or receive your penitent acknowledgments—that she will not die while I am telling her the horrid——"

"What! has she yet to hear of it?" he exclaimed, looking aghast.

"I told you so, sir, some time ago."

"Oh, yes, you did—you did—but I forgot. 'Lord, Lord, I feel going mad!" He rose feebly from the sofa, and staggered for a moment to and fro, but his knees refused their support, and he sunk down again upon his seat, where he sat staring at me with a dull glassy eye, while I proceeded.

"His little boy"—my voice faltered—"is living at my house; perhaps you would refuse to see him, for he is very like his wretched father."

"Oh bring him! bring him to me!" he murmured. "How I will worship him! what I will do for him! But how his murdered father will always look out of his eyes at me! Oh my God! whither shall I go, what must I do to escape? Oh that I had died and been buried with my poor wife, the other day, before I had heard of all this!"

"You would have known—you would have heard of it *hereafter*, sir!"

"Ah! that's it! I know it—I know what you mean, and I feel it's true. Yes, I shall be *damned* for what I've done. Such a wretch—how can I expect forgiveness? Oh, will you read a prayer with me? No, I'll pray myself—no."

"Pray, sir; and may your prayers be heard! And also pray that I may be able to tell safely my awful message to your daughter—that the blow may not smite her into the grave! And, lastly, sir," I added, rising, and addressing him with all the emphasis and solemnity I could, "I charge you, in the name of God, to make no attempt to see your daughter, or send to her, till you see or hear from me again."

He promised to obey my injunctions, imploring me to call upon her the next day, and grasping my hand between his own with a convulsive energy, so that I could not extricate it but with some little force. As I had never once offered a syllable of sympathy throughout our interview, so I quitted his presence coldly and sternly, while he threw himself down at full length upon the sofa, and I heard, without any emotion, his half-choked exclamation, "Lord, what is to become of me!"

I chose for poor Elliott, not the vault of Mr. Hillary, but a grave in the humble churchyard of ——, where the poor suicide might slumber in "penitential loneliness!"

I shall not bring the reader again into the guilty and gloomy presence of Mr. Hillary. His hard heart was indeed broken by the blow that poor Elliott had so recklessly struck, and whose mournful prophecy was in this respect fulfilled, Providence decreed that the declining days of the inexorable and unnatural parent should be clouded with a wretchedness that admitted of neither intermission nor alleviation, equally destitute as he was of consolation from the past, and hope from the future!

And his daughter! O disturb not the veil that has fallen over the broken-hearted!

Never again did the high and noble spirit of Mary Elliott lift itself up; for her heart lay buried in her young husband's grave—the grave dug for him by the eager and cruel hands of her father.

In vain did those hands lavishly scatter about her all the splendours and luxuries of unbounded wealth; they could never divert her cold undazzled eye from the mournful image of him whose death had purchased them; and what could she see ever beside her, in her too late repentant father, but his murderer!

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# THE OLD MANOR-HOUSE.

## CHAPTER I.

THERE are few places more every way disagreeable for a residence than London during the autumnal months. The social stir and animation that rendered it so delightful in the spring have died away into comparative silence; the grass grows in the West-end squares; the City looks disconsolate, like an Irish clergyman on tithing-day; Pall Mall is all but deserted; scarce a pretty or a gay face is to be seen in the Parks, or a bag and wig in Chancery Lane, or a patriot in Parliament Street; the Exhibition-rooms are closed; the theatre contains, perhaps, but a dozen bald-heads in the pit, and about as many white pocket-handkerchiefs in the dress-boxes; there is no one to gossip with at the clubs or hotels; the jarvey sleeps without fear of interruption on his coach-box; the cab-man, standing on the sun-scorched pavement at the door of a gin-shop, looks restless and perplexed, like a cat in a strange kitchen; and if you chance to stumble against an old friend at the turning of a street, he gives you the cut direct, quite annoyed to think you should have recognised in him that unfashionable animal—the last man! Then the hydrophobia panic!—"Think of that, Master Brooke!" No sooner do the dog-days set in, than some crazy cur makes a point of snatching a hasty mouthful from the calf of an elderly gentleman. The newspapers are all instantly in arms about the catastrophe. Nervous folks—for we are all nervous nowadays—walk about shuddering with apprehension, and glancing every

now and then at their uneasy legs; while reports are every where prevalent that "not less than sixteen married men have, within the last week, eschewed all liquids, and barked themselves to death, leaving each a wife and six small children behind him." I say nothing of minor miseries, such as the infectious hypochondriasm of the tradesman who has nothing to do but stand with a pen behind his ear at his shop-door, or the melancholy "lodgings to let" in every quarter of the town; for my object is not to weary my reader's patience, or distress his nerves, by a prolix recapitulation of grievances, but simply to make good my assertion, that, of all places in the world, few or none are so detestable as London in autumn.

Such being my view of the matter, I always make a point of quitting town when the first hydrophobic paragraph appears in the papers. If one will not take a shrewd hint, one deserves to suffer. My excursions are various—sometimes confined to England, and sometimes extending over the Continent. This year, perhaps, I go to Paris, for the purpose of seeing Louis Philippe shot at, which usually occurs once a-week in that sprightly skrimmage-loving metropolis; and the next I rest satisfied with a stroll among the wilds of Dartmoor (a pet place of mine), or the more imposing Welsh Alps. And here let me assure you, my gentle Cockney, that a ramble among these last is a very different thing from a ramble among the Hampstead highlands. Primrose Hill is scarcely so high or so steep as Snowdon; nor can I take it on my conscience to assert that the pass at Kentish-town, which leads you into Pancras Vale, is at all to be compared with that at Beddgelert. But perhaps I am partial.

To resume: My excursion last year was to Wales. I had heard much from old Cambridge friends touching this famous region; so, one fine morning in June, I packed up a few shirts in my carpet-bag, together with some artificial flies, a Walton's Angler, and a few well-thumbed numbers of Blackwood, containing "Hints for the holidays," and "Christopher in his Sporting-Jacket," and, thus appropriately equipped, set off for Swansea, where, without halting longer than a day, I hired one of those eccentric vehicles, called "flies," which, in the fullness of time,

brought me, in a disjointed condition, to Llandilo, a small town situated in the heart of the vale of Towy.

The scenery in this neighbourhood posseses a world of recommendations. You have the Black Mountains glooming on the horizon; Grongar Hills, Carricksawthy Common, and the ruins of Wynevor, within a stone's throw of you; and the haunted Cerrig-Cennan Castle within the easy distance of five miles. Then, if you have any taste for thunder-storms, and the atmosphere should be that way disposed, you have the finest possible opportunity of enjoying them in perfection among the mountain-ranges of Llynn-y-van. In London, a hurly-burly of this sort is a very safe, tame, commonplace affair—a uniform failure, and most discreditable to the dignity of the elements engaged in it. The thunder, its voice deadened by the eternal fog, growls faintly like a drowsy lion; the lightning contents itself with merely killing an Irishman or two, or throwing a few old women into fits; while a small bolt, perhaps, scarcely bigger than a crab-apple, drops down through the sky-light into a tailor's shop, for no other reason, apparently, than to "create a sensation" among the apprentices, and furnish the newspapers with a hysterical paragraph. Such, in nine cases out of ten, is a Cockney thunder-storm. But in Wales, among the mountains, it is a very different affair. There the thunder vindicates its full claims to sublimity, roaring and rattling among the craggy heights with a sound as if ten thousand brazen chariots were at one and the same moment clattering along the floor of heaven; while the blue arrowy lightning digs gashes in the stern forehead of the precipice, compared with which a cart-rut were a mere wrinkle; or splits asunder immense fragments of overhanging granite, and sends them crashing down into the astonished tarn beneath. Then the frenzied rain, with the rush of the torrent, which but an hour before was a bashful rivulet, silver-lining the side of some sunny upland! Away, away it goes, scampering faster than ever poet scampered from a bailiff; bounding deliriously from rock to rock; swallowing bridges at a gulp; playing the very devil with trees, brick-walls, and pigsties; and subjecting whole villages to the ceremony of an undesired baptism.

But, though pleasant enough in their way, thunder-storms have

their weak points. It is awkward to get wet through, with never a house within six miles of you—to have the hot lightning flashing across your eyes, and the thunder threatening the tympanum of your auriculars—and, still more embarrassing, to be blown over a precipice while leaning forward to recover your eloped castor. I once witnessed a magnificent tempest among the congenial wilds of Llynn-y-van; but, lover of the sublime as I am, I have not the slightest desire to witness another. Enough is as good as a feast, and I am naturally moderate in my appetites.

Another recommendation of the Vale of Towy—to say nothing of its being the most classic spot in Wales, if Dyer and Twm Sion Catti (the Bard and the Brigand) can make it so—is the unrivalled excellence of its fly-fishing. The natives will tell you that you have nothing more to do than just throw in your line, and pull out sewen or salmon—which you please. I cannot say I found it so. Deuce a fish ever rose to my fly; I never even got so much as a nibble; and yet I have seen a grinning bare-legged urchin, hardly reaching up to my watch-chain, pull out, with only a worm at the end of a pin-hook, a fine spanking sewen, which but the moment before had been coqueting with my fly, and making me believe—the rascal!—that he was going to bolt it. This convinces me that it is not skill, but luck, that is required in angling, else I should certainly have exhausted the river.

I very soon, therefore, got tired of fly-fishing—for one does not like to be the constant butt and laughing-stock of the finny tribe—and, laying aside my angling apparatus, devoted myself, like Dr. Syntax, to searching out the most picturesque glens and waterfalls, castles and mountains, of the district. I misquoted Dyer in the "thrush-grove" at Grongar Hill; explored the Robber's cave fast by the cataract springs of Towy; watched the fishermen paddling in their coracles across Tally Pool, and got ducked in attempting ditto; and then, having seen all that was to be seen in the neighbourhood, crossed the Black Mountains in the direction of the distant Brecon, and ensconced myself in the snug little village of Plasswynnock.

The locality of this hamlet pleased me exceedingly. It was as

quiet, and retired, and unassuming as a patriotic Patlander, lying far away from the beaten tract of tourists at the edge of a lonely moor, and consisted of one straggling winding street, with a yew-shaded churchyard in its rear, crowded with trophies of the local apothecary's skill, hard by which stood an isolated old-fashioned little public-house—the landlord called it a hotel!—intituled the Castle. At this *auberge* I took up my head-quarters, and, as I had done before at Llandilo, occupied myself with strolling about the neighbourhood, and filling my sketch-book with drawings of its most silvan out-of-the-way bits of landscape.

One evening, on my return home to Plasswynnock from an excursion which I had taken across the moor, I chanced to light on a small solitary ruin, consisting of but a few brick walls. This ruin, which was scarcely more than a mile distant from the village, was perched on the brow of a table-land, forming a gradual slope in front, which had once, no doubt, been a garden or paddock, but was now in the last stage of decay. I have been familiar with ruins from childhood—I was brought up under the shadow of the old crumbling walls of Reading Abbey—yet I know not that I ever saw one which more impressed me with a stern sense of desolation than this. A sentiment breathed out from its dead brick walls deeper than any which even the monastic relics of Tintern Abbey had called up in my mind. There the picturesque helps to relieve and mellow one's sense of melancholy; but here all was decay and death in its most bald, squalid, undisguised, and homely form. Castellated and monastic ruins are abundant throughout Wales; but this was the first family mansion, or manor-house, in that condition, I had yet met with.

Singular, said I, as I paced its confined interior, that so plain unaspiring a domicile should have been allowed to become so utter a wreck, without an effort being made to preserve it. Castles and monasteries, we all know, run to seed quite as a matter of course; indeed they seem built for no other purpose than to serve the turn of the novelist and landscape-painter; for, in the first place, their vast extent prevents their being fitly kept up; and, secondly, their owners having usually been of that class whose rank and connexions have forced them to take a leading

part in the civil broils of the period, they have, of necessity, risen or fallen—and, in the game of war, few rise the winners with the party to which they had attached themselves. But this could scarcely have been the case in the instance before me. The house had belonged to no powerful turbulent noble, but evidently to some one in the peaceful middle walks of life—probably the great man of the village—some convivial sporting Welsh squire, the very last person to sacrifice his interests to his ambition. Yet was it swept wholly to destruction, and with it, most likely, the family who had once called it their own!

My curiosity being strongly excited on this subject, I no sooner returned to "mine inn," than I summoned the landlord thereof, stated the particulars of my discovery, and demanded explanation at his hands. This was ungrudgingly afforded me. The house in question, said Boniface, had been in a dilapidated state ever since the year 1770—though it was not at that period in the hopeless condition in which it now was—and the family to whom it had belonged (the Lords of the Manor) had, as I anticipated, wholly past away, without leaving any other trace of their existence than a few mouldering brick walls. In answer to my further enquiries, the man acquainted me with all the circumstances connected with the decay of the Manor-House, just as he had heard them detailed a hundred times by his respected parent, who had long since gone to the place appointed for all publicans. As this "Tale of my Landlord" strongly interested me, I took notes of it at the time, and from those notes have composed the subjoined narrative, which I have told in my own manner, though without materially altering the substance of honest Boniface's communication.

## CHAPTER II.

It was late on a summer evening, in the year 1788, when the father of the present landlord owned the tavern to which I have alluded in the foregoing chapter, that a stranger, fatigued apparently with a long day's journey, entered the snug well-sanded little coffee-room, and, requesting to be shown into a private apartment, ordered supper and a bed. He was a man whom an

expert physiognomist would have guessed to be about forty-three years of age, though on a first superficial glance he seemed considerably older, for his shoulders were slightly bent, his hair grey, the fire of his dark eye something quenched, and his lofty forehead full of wrinkles. Altogether he appeared like one on whom grief had laid her heaviest hand, but who had not surrendered himself to her domination without a fierce struggle.

Struck with his reserved and commanding air, the landlord ushered him, with one of his profoundest obeisances, into his own private room, and then hurried off to get ready the best supper his establishment afforded—a superfluous task, for the stranger, possibly from ill health, or, what was more likely, from over-fatigue, did but sorry justice to the tender white pullet and the delicious *cwrrw;* but just picking a few mouthfuls, and drinking a small glass of ale, rose from table, and summoned Boniface into his presence.

"I suppose," said he, "I can have accommodation here for a few nights, till I have completed some arrangements that I am about to form for my future residence in this neighbourhood?"

"Yes sure, sir," replied the delighted landlord, "and the best of every thing—a capital bed, fish, flesh, fowl, and such ale! —ah, sir, I 'll be bound you haven't tasted the like for many a day; a hogshead of it, which I keep expressly for such gentlefolks as you, was brewed when the last Mr. Glendovery went abroad, now near eighteen years since."

"Glendovery!" enquired the stranger, "and pray, who may he be?"

"Oh, the gentleman that owned the old Manor-House that you see to your right on entering the village."

"I marked it particularly; it is a fine building; what a pity it is in such a ruinous condition!"

"That 's what we all say, but there 's no help for it."

"Why so; is it not inhabited?"

"Yes, there 's an old woman in it who lives rent-free, just for the purpose of keeping it tidy, in case any one should be disposed to purchase it. Evans, our attorney, to whose father the last owner sold it, is constantly endeavouring to get rid of

it, for he cannot afford to live in it himself, or even make such repairs as would render it habitable."

"You say the last owner. Is he dead, then?"

"Yes; we heard that he died abroad some ten or a dozen years since.—But, Lord bless me, sir, you have not drunk your ale! Well, I never—Pray, do taste it: my wife calls it meat and drink too, and she's a first-rate judge."

"I should be happy to do justice to your ale, my friend, but really I am so fatigued that I have wholly lost my appetite. Let my room, therefore, be got ready for my reception.—And harkee, Mr. Landlord," added the stranger, in a grave stern tone, "be sure you do not let me be disturbed on any pretence whatever. When wearied, as I am just now, I am apt to be restless at night; so, if you should hear me stirring about my chamber, you will know the reason."

"Oh certainly, sir. But if you'd try this little specific"—here the landlord pointed to the *cwrw*—I'd answer for your sleeping like a top."

"Enough, enough, sir," said the stranger, impatiently; "go and do as I have desired you, and, above all, do not forget my warning." And, so saying, he motioned the man from the room.

Having seen his guest snugly ensconced in his dormitory, the landlord went into the kitchen, where his wife sat expecting him, and informed her of the stranger's orders, which, as might have been anticipated, set both on the *qui vive*.

"And pray what sort of a person may he be?" enquired the landlady, applying the jug to her lips.

"Why, a half-proudish half civilish sort of a body—but quite the gentleman, though he does not take to my good ale. However, if he pays well for it—and I'm sure he must have money, he orders one about so—I'm not the man to quarrel with his tastes."

"Nor I. But, for all that, David, it's as well to keep a sharp look-out—there's many a fine-dressed man with never a shilling in his pocket."

"Right, dame; but the stranger's none of that sort, I'll swear, for he talks of coming to live among us."

"Why, that certainly alters the case, David, and we can't be

too civil to him, although he is such a queer body as to talk of walking about his room at night, merely because he is knocked up with fatigue."

In this sort of conversation between the good dame and her yoke-fellow time wore away, until at length the black tall kitchen clock striking eleven, and all being silent in the stranger's chamber, the couple gave up all further idea of watching, and marched off to bed.

Scarcely, however, had they got into their first nap, when they were roused by a quick tread in the chamber beside them, which was that wherein the stranger slept. The landlord was the first to hear the noise, and, instantly jumping out of bed, ran to the door, where he stood listening in a perfect fever of curiosity. For some minutes he heard nothing more tham tramp—tramp—tramp across the floor, but presently there was a deep groan, followed by a piercing scream. Hastily awaking his wife, Boniface proceeded to dress himself; but before either could complete their toilet, another scream, louder than the former, rung through the house, and in less than ten minutes the whole establishment, headed by the landlord, and tailed by the landlady, were halting at the stranger's door, uncertain whether to recede or advance. As, however, the groans still continued, and the poor man seemed in great pain, it was voted, *nem. con.*, that the door, which was but on the latch, should be opened; which was accordingly done, and the whole picturesque party poured, like a torrent, into the room.

And here they witnessed a spectacle that might have appalled far bolder spirits. In the centre of the floor stood the stranger, who, it was manifest, had never undressed, with his arms extended, as if waving off some blasting object, his eyes fixed, his teeth clenched, his white shivering lips apart, and his whole air and countenance that of a demoniac. For a brief space he appeared unconscious of the presence of the intruders; but no sooner did he recognise them, than, as if by magic, he became instantly cool and collected, and darting a fierce look on the landlord, asked him how he had dared disobey his injunctions; and, without waiting for his reply, rushed to the door for the purpose of ejecting the party, who, misinterpreting his abrupt

movement, and taking for granted that he was a lunatic thirsting for their blood, did not wait to offer explanation or apology, but hurried, with a devil-take-the-hindmost unceremoniousness, to the staircase, down which they all plunged headlong, while the stranger, without deigning to take the slightest notice of their situation, coolly locked his door, and retired to rest.

The next morning when he came down to breakfast, the first thing he did was to ring for the landlord, and, seeing the poor man's embarrassment, at once turned the conversation on the subject of the preceding night's interruption, observing, with a forced effort at indifference—"Doubtless you must have fancied my behaviour strange last night; but I warned you how liable I was to affections of this nature, and you should have been advised. The truth is, I was labouring under a violent spasmodic attack, to which I have been subject for years, and which always affects me according to the greater or less degree of fatigue I have undergone."

"Well, come now, I am heartily glad to hear this," replied honest David, brightening up, "for, to say the truth, sir, my wife and myself had almost begun to think——"

"Sir, I beg in future you will confine your thoughts to your own affairs, and leave me to think of mine." Then, putting on a more affable manner, the stranger added—"You told me yesterday that a Mr. Evans was now in possession of the Manor-House; I shall be glad to have some talk with him on the subject, for, as my health requires mountain air and strict seclusion, I do not see that I can do better than occupy the house in question."

"Occupy?" said Boniface, "why there are scarcely four habitable rooms in the whole building!"

"No matter for that, I require but little accomodation, for I am an old traveller, and have slept many a night on the bare ground before now."

"Hem, a military man, I guess," thought the landlord—"Well, just as your honour pleases."

"Exactly so, my good friend, and, as I am an enemy to all unnecessary delays, we will settle this matter at once. Be good enough, therefore, to inform Mr. Evans that I shall be glad to see

him here this evening, and meantime I will just take a stroll out and inspect this ruin;" and, accordingly, after despatching a hasty breakfast, the stranger sauntered away in the direction of the Manor-House.

The morning was one that might have inspired even a stock-jobber; the air was fresh and perfumed with the breath of a thousand wild flowers; the dews were steaming up from the valleys; the clouds rolling off like smoke from the mountains; birds singing; cattle lowing; plough-men whistling merrily as they went slouching home to their breakfasts, with their coats flung across their shoulders, and their swarthy hands passed ever and anon across their dripping brows; in a word, the spirit of universal cheerfulness lay soft and sunny upon earth. But the stranger seemed in no mood to enjoy the freshness and laughter of this mercurial morning; by him the sights and sounds of nature were unheeded; and he pursued his way, alone and thoughtfully, pausing only for an instant to kiss the ruddy cheek of a fine little boy who stood barefooted, at a cottage-door, playfully mocking the blythe tones of a blackbird that hung above him in a wicker cage.

A quarter of an hour's walk brought the stranger to the Manor-House, when, after halting to examine the building, as if to ascertain whether it were still fit to be tenanted, he hastened up the gradual hill that sloped downwards to the road in front, and, tapping lightly at the parlour window—for the door had neither bell nor knocker—an old woman, who was seated there at breakfast, came forth and gave him admittance.

The interior of the building did not belie the account which the landlord had given of it. The hall was a place of call for the four winds of heaven; the floors, which were only half covered with a coarse ragged drugget, creaked beneath the lightest tread; the windows were hung with dusty cobwebs, decked, like an anatomical museum, with innumerable skeletons of flies and spiders long since defunct; and the doors, whose hinges were rustier than the shield of Martinus Scriblerus, shook, when clapped to, like a fat man in the cholic. Nor was the garden in the rear in much better condition. Weeds usurped the place of flowers, and the rank grass grew even among the interstices of

the paved stones in the yard; while a ditch, half mud half water, its surface dotted with tadpoles, went crawling and stinking along at a snail's pace, dividing the garden from a patchy half-shaven meadow, on which a lean donkey, itself a ruin, was with difficulty picking up a subsistence.

The stranger, who was close followed by the old woman, surveyed this spectacle of decay with the painful interest it was so well calculated to excite in a heart accessible only to the more sombre feelings—these feelings being not a little increased by the loquacity of the ancient dame, which he in vain endeavoured to repress. When he had sufficiently inspected the lower part of the house, he ascended a "most musical, most melancholy" staircase, which brought him to the head of a gallery, along which ran a suite of four tolerably-sized rooms. Pausing at the nearest of these, his attendant thinking, of course, that he wished to enter, drew a bunch of keys from her pocket, and, before he was aware of her design, flung the door open. This apartment was, if possible, in a still worse plight than even the lower ones, for the walls were dripping with damp, and full of cracks and crevices; the curtains, eaten into a thousand holes by moths, were silvered all over with their powdered plumage; and in the hearth, upon a few shavings, lay the corpse of a skinny gray-whiskered rat, who had evidently died of that malady to which Grub-street is so peculiarly liable.

The stranger's eyes no sooner travelled over this room than a violent shuddering came over him, and he instantly passed on, saying, in a husky tone of voice, while he buttoned up his coat, "Shut the door, woman; the air of this apartment is quite chilling."

"And no wonder, sir, for we seldom enter it. Indeed, I do not suppose that the door has been opened a dozen times since the death of Mr. Glendovery. Ah, sir, that was a sad business. Only think of a young gentleman dying of apoplexy just when he was about to get married. Sad case, sir; war'n't it?"

While the old woman was thus indulging her love of gossip, the stranger on whom, as an invalid, the death-like chill of the Manor-House had operated with injurious effect, hurried away from her down stairs, and, without waiting to be shown the more

habitable parts of the building, made the best of his way back to the village.

In the evening, after dinner, Mr. Evans introduced himself. He was an off-hand familiar young fellow, one of those officious busy-bodies, who, negligent of their own, are constantly prying into other people's affairs. He had been bred an attorney, which had sharpened a naturally-acute intellect, but, having been left a small competency by his father, just enough to enable him to take rank among the magnates of the village, he had abandoned his legal pursuits for that more congenial one of prowling about the neighbourhood, and acquainting himself with the name, fortune, connexions, and so forth, of every new comer. Yet, though possessed by the demon of inquisitiveness, Evans was not without his redeeming points. He was frank, social, good-natured, and full of that tenacious bull-dog courage, which, with the majority, stands its possessor in the stead of nobler qualities. Moreover, he piqued himself on being "a sturdy Briton," one who stood up for the independence of his order, and had no idea of acknowledging a superior. His one favourite aphorism was, "an honest man 's the noblest work of God," which our sensitive publican never heard without shifting about uneasily in his seat, and casting a sort of half-repentant glance at the scores on his slate, which hung above the kitchen-door. In person, Evans was broad and bull-necked, with legs of the solidity of mile-stones, a nose that turned up like a fish-hook, and red raw hands like a carrot.

Such a man was scarcely likely to render himself acceptable to one so reserved and haughty as the stranger, who, accordingly, took a dislike to him at the very first glance. However, as he bid fair to serve his turn, he concealed his disgust, and at once entered upon the subject that had brought them together, by proposing forthwith to take up his abode at the Manor-House, to which the other—though not without some surprise at the suddenness of the resolution—unhesitatingly acceded; and, the bargain being struck, the stranger was the very next day put into possession of the house, his travelling-apparatus sent on to him from Swansea, and what few repairs and articles of furniture he wanted, supplied to him by the auctioneer of Plasswynnock—

your auctioneer in a sequestered Welsh village being always that most ordinary and common-place of characters, "a universal genius."

## CHAPTER III.

The stranger had now been nearly a month resident at the Manor-House, but so secluded were his habits, that little more was known of him than on the first day when he made his appearance in the village. The curiosity of the gossips was in consequence strongly excited, and frequent and searching were the questions put to his one female domestic by the landlord of the Castle; but, though quite willing enough, the girl was unable to answer them; for during the day she saw little or nothing of her master, and at twilight, when she had set forth his scanty repast, she was invariably ejected, like the maid-servants from Commodore Trunnion's garrison.

Two facts, however, were ascertained—first, that his name was Dwarrys; and, secondly, that, though not rich, he was by no means deficient in the inestimable gifts of the pocket. But beyond these points the village could ascertain nothing—a disappointment which it took as much to heart as if a grievous insult had been put upon it. "Who is this Great Unknown was now the incessant cry of the coterie at the Castle. In vain Evans set every engine at work to fathom the momentous mystery; in vain waylaid the stranger (for so I shall continue to call him) in his outgoings and his incomings; in vain called at the Manor-House, under the pretence of suggesting such repairs as might be necessary for his better accommodation; and, on one occasion, went the extreme length of inviting him to dinner; his familiar advances were always coldly repulsed—an affront to his self-love which inspired him with an absolute hatred for the stranger.

Nor was this aversion confined to him alone. The whole village, more or less, partook of it, and, in the bitterness of baffled curiosity, came to the conclusion that the stranger was no other than some broken-down *roué*, who had eloped from his creditors. Some even went so far as to assert that he was a felon

broke loose from jail; while the sexton, who was a firm believer in supernatural existences, hinted his suspicion that he was a direct importation from Tophet. Ah, how severe is the penalty those must pay who affect to be above their neighbours! There is nothing society so much resents as this. Crime may be forgiven, but not want of sympathy. To win the world's esteem, one must walk side by side with it, give in to its caprices, and view it from its own level; to stand coldly aloof, or look down on it from the fancied elevation of one's own mind, is to mortify its self-conceit, and become the object of its special hostility.

Meantime, according to the best accounts that could be collected, the stranger's health fast declined. Yet he adopted no precautions to improve it, but let Nature take her course, careless, apparently, whither that course might tend. His sole amusement consisted in rambling by day about the most secluded spots in the district; and at nightfall, when the red lights were gleaming from the cottage windows, and the smith's anvil was silent, and the children's glad voices were hushed in sleep, he would sit for hours among the tombs in the churchyard, which few cared to pass after the bat had once commenced his circling flight round the grey spire.

I have said that the neighbourhood was remarkable for its picturesque beauty. It was so in a high degree, but one spot in particular, about two miles distant from the village, was unsurpassed in quiet unassuming loveliness by any scene in the principality. This was a small emerald-green valley, hemmed close round by sloping hills, which, in the summer season, shone a waving sea of golden blossoms, musical with bees, and redolent of perfume. Right through the centre of this little Tempe lapsed a pebbly brooklet with a clear tinkling sound, spanned by a wooden bridge, and turning a mill at the head of the valley, where stood one grey moss-topped cottage, with a honeysuckle porch in front, opening on a small strip of a garden that served the double purpose of ornament and utility, one half being full of flowers, and the other of vegetables. Solitude lay on this sequestered nook like a dream; it was a resting-place for a troubled imagination—so still, so fresh, so cheerful!—and here, accordingly, the stranger would often come, and, as well as a nature

which knew no May-day would permit, surrender himself up to that calm subdued spirit of meditation which is so apt to steal over the mind, even when plunged in the depths of affliction. Here, in the mellow flush of evening, he would be seen by the miller and his young family on their return home reclined on the fresh sward by the brook, sometimes lost in placid reverie, but oftener wandering to and fro in that restless moody state which bespeaks a soul struggling to recover that peace which is gone for ever.

One day, when the stranger was leaning over the bridge, gazing towards the airy far-stretching uplands that sentinelled this Arcadian valley, he was startled by a lively whistle, and, looking round, discovered Evans with a fly-rod in his hand close at his elbow.

"Fine day this, Mr. Dwarrys," said the attorney, with his usual blunt familiarity. The stranger coldly bowed, but made no answer. "I do not know whether you are fond of fly-fishing," continued the persevering attorney; "but, if so, you are welcome to a throw with my rod; the sewen rise uncommonly well hereabouts." And he handed over his rod to the stranger, who, however, refused to take it, saying, "I thank you, sir, but I am no angler."

"Indeed!—humph—sorry for that—nothing like fishing to kill an idle hour or so."

"Very likely, to those who have nothing better to do with themselves," replied the stranger, with a sneer; at the same time moving away from the bridge.

In an instant the attorney was after him.

"I beg pardon, Mr. Dwarrys; but——"

"But what, sir!" said the stranger, turning sharp round on him; "my time is precious, and I have no desire to waste it in idle gossip."

"I was merely going to observe, that, as I was walking your way, perhaps we might walk together."

"Sir," replied the stranger, with difficulty suppressing the inclination he felt to knock down the busy-body, "I can partly guess your motive for making this uncalled-for offer, and beg leave to decline it. You and I have met oftener than one at least

of us desires; and if such annoyance is persisted in, I shall find some method for putting a stop to it. This neighbourhood is quite wide enough for both, so there is no occasion for one to be constantly intruding himself into the other's presence. Good morning, sir; I wish you success in your sport."

"The proud insolent upstart!" said the attorney, stung to the quick by this cavalier behaviour. "So he declines all my civilities—and with contempt, too! Well, he is the first who ever did so with impunity. Haughty as he is, I'll soon bring him to his level, or my name's not——. Damn this fly! it falls with such a splash into the water, that not a sewen will rise to it—and he thinks he has baffled me!—Good, but we'll soon see who is the shrewder of the two." And, hastily putting up his tackle, the attorney marched home, sputtering all the way like a roasted potatoe.

## CHAPTER IV.

"And so the stranger refuses to have any thing to say to you?" asked the landlord of Evans, as the latter gentleman concluded his account of the above interview, while seated one evening, in company with some of the magnates of the village, in the private room of the Castle; "can't say I think the better of him for giving himself such airs; but what can you expect from a man who has never once ordered a bottle of my ale since he's been at the Manor-House?"

"Yes, and what's worse than that," observed the apothecary, with an expression of face as bitter as his own physic, "though he's dying by inches, as any one may see who looks at him, not a single summons have I yet had from him. But he's mad, poor gentleman, which accounts for all."

"Not a doubt of it," rejoined Boniface; "for to say nothing of his extraordinary conduct here one night, I'm told he scarcely touches a mouthful from sunrise to sunset!"

"Frightful!" chimed in the curate, an oily little man, round as a beer-barrel, with a hot copper nose and broad moony face, that hung out a flag of defiance to care; "there is evidently something preying on his mind, for lights are often seen in his

room at a time when all decent folks should be a-bed; and then he looks so black when one happens to meet him!—just for all the world, Doctor, like one of your patients after a week's physicking."

"Uncommon odd!" observed the landlord, shaking his head mysteriously.

"But that's not all," resumed the curate, "for many a night has he been seen sitting alone upon a grave in the churchyard; and once, as I myself was passing near the Manor-House on my way home after supping with the auctioneer, I heard such groans proceeding from the apartment which he inhabits, that if I had not luckily bethought me of a prayer or two, I'm convinced I should have died of fright. As it was, I was so shaken with agitation, that when I got home I could scarcely stand."

"Are you quite sure it was from agitation?" slily interposed the apothecary; "there are many things besides fear which will account for a man's inability to stand after supper."

"Poor gentleman," said the compassionate landlady, "I've no doubt he's lost his wife, for nothing else could affect him so."

Her husband looked as if he thought there were many more serious calamities in life than the loss of a wife; but as, like the best of us, he was considerably under the sway of the petticoat, he did not give utterance to his thoughts.

While this conversation was going forward, the attorney remained in a state of sulky reverie, but the instant the curate talked of the churchyard he was all attention.

"I cannot conceive," he said, "what the fellow can want there. No good, I'll swear."

"Perhaps he's a resurrectionist," hinted the apothecary; "the Caermarthen Journal says they're very much abroad just now."

"I should not wonder," said Evans; "he looks exactly like one."

At this instant a loud knocking was heard at the door.

"Hark," said the landlord, "what noise is that? Pray God it be not the stranger come to——"

Before he could complete the sentence the door was thrown violently back on its hinges, and in rushed the sexton, pale as a ghost, and spotted from head to foot with dirt, who, dropping

into a chair, roared out with the lungs of a Boanerges, "Oh Lord, oh Lord, I've seen the Devil!"

"The Devil!" faltered the landlord, "my stars, only think!"

"And, pray, where did you meet him?" asked Evans, laughing.

"In the churchyard; he started up from behind a tomb at the very moment as I was passing."

"Hah! indeed!" replied the attorney, with singular earnestness, "and what did he say? What was he doing?"

The sexton, so soon as he had regained his composure by a hearty draught of *cwrrw*, hastened to gratify the company's curiosity; and, in order that I may do the same with my readers, it is necessary that I go back a few hours in my narrative.

There had been a fair held that morning in the neighbouring little town of Llanurth, at which the sexton, who was also a bit of a farmer, had attended for the purpose of disposing of some of his farm-yard stock. Having accomplished the sale greatly to his satisfaction, he was about returning home, when he chanced to meet an old friend who lived within a stone's throw of the town, and who insisted on his finishing the evening with him, to which the sexton, having a few spare hours on hand, readily acceded. As is usual on such occasions, the *cwrrw*, to say nothing of the supplemental punch-bowl, flew rapidly from hand to hand; and the conversation, after shifting about like a weathercock in April, at length settled down into a discussion on the well-accredited apparition of the "man without the head" (no very rare phenomenon), who had been again seen by deaf Dick, the drunken cobbler, among the ruins of Cerrig-Cennan Castle. At the period to which this tale refers, the lower classes of Welsh were notorious for their faith in these local hobgoblinisms; and none more so than the sexton, who accordingly swallowed his friend's story with all the zeal of a devotee, repaying with others of a like character, until the dropping of the sun behind the biforked Brecon Van warned him that it was time to return home.

The first part of his road lay through some low meadows to the rear of Llanurth, but the last, and by far the largest, portion across a wild tract of moor, which was seldom or never traversed

after sunset. Now the worthy grave-digger, who was something of the timidest, had an instinctive horror of a solitary trip over a waste like this at such an hour, which the legends he had been listening to contributed not a little to strengthen, so he pursued his way across it with the same misgivings with which a schoolboy crosses a churchyard when the wind is at work among the tombs; striving to pluck up confidence by whistling a few bars of a sprightly tune, and halting every now and then to see if he could discover any belated traveller like himself, on whose company he might fasten himself. But all was perfect solitude—all too was silence, except the faint sluggish trickling of an unseen stream, or the moaning of the breeze over the unsheltered desert.

By the time that he had accomplished a third of his distance, the torches which sunset had lit up in the west, one by one went out, and the moor lay, far and wide, a black frowning mass before him; while the few stunted trees and masses of rock that were scattered sparingly about it, took strange and exaggerated forms in the gloom. As the good man hurried on his road, he chanced to stumble up against one of these dwarf oaks, whose lower branches projected over the pathway; and fancying in his bewilderment that it was neither more nor less than a hobgoblin —peradventure the man without the head—who had started up to waylay him, he began, in the true professional spirit, to mutter the first words of the burial service; but finding that no further opposition was offered, he forced a faint laugh at his own weakness, and sped on, thumping his breast, and pulling his hat desperately over his brows, as if to say "Who's afraid?"

Scarcely, however, had he screwed his courage to the sticking point, when he saw, about thirty yards before him, a dim moving light—one of those *ignes fatui* which are so often seen playing on the surface of marshy grounds; but which, as a matter of course, he mistook for a corpse-candle eloped from a churchyard, for the express purpose of giving him a friendly hint that his hour was come. The faint rustling of the wind among the reeds that fringed this morass went far to confirm his conjecture, for, in his prepared ear, it sounded exactly like the whispering of unearthly voices. Here was a predicament! What should he do?

How should he escape it? To go forward, would be to rush on his doom; to wait till the moon should rise—the guardian moon before whose blessed radiance all Welsh spirits make a point of vanishing—would be to wait for hours, chilled to the bone, and ague-stricken by the unwholesome dews; and as for going back and stopping out all night at Llanurth—what would his wife say? and as this idea flashed across the sexton's addled brains, there arose with it the vision of a lean, wizen-faced, shrewish old woman, seated alone, with looks as black as the night, by a cottage window at a supper-table, on which lay, covered up between two plates, some eggs and bacon, quite spoiled—having been fried a full hour since—together with a hearth-broom, which the erysipelas-tempered dame, as ever and anon she turned her sleepy eyes towards the clock, clutched in a fist evidently accustomed to wield such a weapon with formidable effect.

This domestic vision terrified the perplexed sexton nearly as much as the warning light before him; even now, in fancy, he felt the hearth-broom anointing his shoulders, while, to consummate his sufferings, he found that the track which he had been hitherto pursuing was no longer discernible. The case being thus desperate, he allowed himself no further time for consideration, but struck off at once to the left—a direction which he knew could not take him very far out of his road, the moor being already more than half passed—and would enable him to steer clear of that ghastly glimmer which the Welsh peasant holds in such superstitious horror. Unfortunately, however, this new track, after leading him through many a shallow marsh, and steep rugged hollow, brought him out on the highest part of the moor—a long table-land, in the centre of which stood a gibbet, whereon hung the skeleton of a smuggler who had long since been hung in chains. As the sexton, who was now perfectly acquainted with his locality, heard the sullen creak of the dry bones swinging in the wind, a new horror came over him; he made sure—so ever active and versatile is the imagination of fear—that the murderer's ghost was pursuing him, and, this giving the last quickening impulse to his excited nerves, he bounded off at a desperate full gallop, never once daring to halt or look

behind him, lest he might see the white shining skeleton face grinning over his shoulder.

Away like the wind he flew, slapdash through brook, and fen, and ditch—ascending here, descending there—while the crafty mountain raven flew screaming above his head, with its dismal "cureq, cureq, cureq," as if it anticipated its prey, till he reached the edge of the moor, which led him past one or two intervening meadows into his own churchyard, at the entrance of the village. Here, one would suppose, the sexton would have felt quite at home; but no—his speed had increased his nervous apprehensions, and he rattled along the old avenue of yews with the swiftness of a hunted hare, stumbling over graves, and knocking his shins against head-stones, with a most irreverent feeling towards the *genius loci*. And now he is in the very middle of the churchyard, when suddenly, just as he is passing a particular tomb, "a gigantic figure, robed in a velvet pall, with horns on his head, flaming saucer eyes, and smelling strongly of sulphur"—so ran the good man's own account—started up, and stood full in his path. He had had no previous notice of this apparition—had heard no sound—it seemed to rise up at once out of the earth; and feeling persuaded, therefore, that it was the devil, he rushed roaring into the Castle, as being the nearest place of refuge he could find.

"Very odd!" said the landlord, handing over the jug of *ourrw* to the sexton, by way of indemnifying him for his sufferings

"Very," rejoined the attorney; who nevertheless had a pretty strong suspicion as to who was the apparition.

Scarcely had the dissyllable escaped his lips, when a dark figure passed the window near where the gossips were seated. The shadow no sooner caught the sexton's eye, than, turning towards it, he exclaimed, relapsing into his former terrors, "There he is—there he is again." The company all started to their legs and rushed to the window, just in time to see a tall black form, shrouded from head to foot in a mantle, sweep by it. The attorney recognised the figure in an instant. It was the stranger!

## CHAPTER V.

About a week afterwards, Evans happened to be passing the churchyard, on his return home from a morning walk, when, just as he reached the swing-gate that leads into it, he caught sight of the sexton, who was digging a grave close beside the spot where he had been so much startled by "the saucer eyes" and sulphurous exhalations of the stranger. Now, the attorney, as I have hinted before, was not the man to miss the opportunity of a quarter of an hour's gossip, so he forthwith joined the sexton, and, after rallying him on his late panic—a sore subject, for the marks of the hearth-broom were yet visible on the good man's shoulders—and asking him if he had heard any more news about "the old misanthrope of the Manor-house," said, "You seem hard worked, Master Thomas."

"Yes," replied the sexton, "I have a good eight-feet job before me. You remember Farmer Lewis, who lived up by the turnpike?"

"What, is he gone at last? Well, he's been a long time making up his mind about it."

"Died last week."

"By the visitation of the Doctor, no doubt," observed the attorney, with a knowing wink of his eye.

"He, he, he! Like enough."

"But what does he want with an eight-feet grave, hey, Master Thomas?" enquired Evans.

"That's his widow's look-out. The old girl has given me orders to dig the grave as deep as possible, lest the resurrection men should have him up again;" and, humming a brisk air, the sexton resumed his labours.

"I say, Master Thomas," continued the attorney, after watching his companion in silence for a few minutes, "ar'n't you digging too near that next grave?"

"Not a bit of it. Do you think I am no judge of distance? Besides, only look at the churchyard, and tell me where there's an inch of room to spare. Too near, indeed! Shows how much you know about grave-digging."

But Evans was right; for, after having dug to the depth of six feet and upwards, the sexton's spade went crashing against the side of the coffin in the adjacent grave, burst open its rotten boards, and sent the skull of its tenant right into the open space.

"Bravo!" said the attorney; "I told you I was right."

The mortified sexton made no reply, but stooped to pick up the skull; and, glad of an opportunity to change the subject of conversation, said, "Well, of all the skulls I ever yet had dealings with, never did I handle such a heavy one as this. What a thick head its owner must have had."

"Ay, that's a malady very common hereabouts," replied the attorney; "and, pray, who was its owner?"

"I suppose you'll find his name on the tomb-stone."

"You're right," said Evans; "here it is—'Hugh Glendovery, *obiit* A.D. 1770, *ætat* 25.' Glendovery—Glendovery!" he added, after a moment's pause; "why, that's the name of the young squire who lived up at the Manor-House, and was found dead of apoplexy one morning, as I have heard my father say."

"Yes, sure," rejoined the sexton, "you ought to recollect the story well, for it was your father that purchased the house of the squire's brother; I'm sure I remember the young gentleman's death, for his was one of the first graves I ever dug. Ah, I can't dig now as I could then;" and he looked at his shrunken hands, and sighed.

"Give me the skull," said Evans. "Very heavy, certainly" —tossing it up as if it were a cricket ball—"uncommon heavy; but, halloo, halloo!—I say, Master Thomas, what, in God's name, is this? Why, here's a long rusty nail dropped out of the ear."

"A what?" asked the sexton, gaping with astonishment like a stranded haddock.

"A nail, man—a nail, half as long as a carving-knife. No wonder the skull felt so weighty. Men are not born with nails in their ears—are they, Tom?"

"Not that I know of," replied the sexton, who interpreted every thing that was said to him in the most literal matter-of-fact spirit.

"Then, depend on it, there's been foul play here. But I see it all," added Evans, in a hurried voice, as a sudden thought

struck him—"I see it all, Master Thomas. One brother died—the other went instantly abroad, supposed to have died there—perhaps not. Perhaps he may be living at this very moment; and, if so, he would be just about the stranger's age. Singular, this never struck me before! I ought to have suspected something wrong, from the fellow's fondness for that old house, his constant visits to the churchyard, his gloom, his temper, and, above all, his dislike to associate with honest folks. However, I'm satisfied now!"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the astounded grave-digger, "who 'd have thought it? But, do you really think there 's murder in the case?"

"Certain of it, Master Thomas. But no matter; for the present, mum 's the word.—Good-by. The affair will be cleared up soon. A proud sulky brute!—but I have him in my clutches now;" and, so saying, Evans restored the nail to its hiding-place, and, putting the skull into his pocket, hurried off, while the sexton remained behind, standing, not "like the statue that enchants the world," but leaning half-stupified on his spade, like one who is himself enchanted.

That same evening a slow firm step ascended the crazy staircase of the Manor-House. The stranger, who had heard the hall-door—which was usually left merely on the latch after sunset, it being by day that he most apprehended the visits of his officious neighbours—open and shut again with a clang that rung through the whole building, at first imagined that it was the servant taking her departure for the night; but soon the footsteps drew nearer, and, ere he could recover from his surprise at such an unexpected intrusion, the door flew wide open, and the attorney stood before him.

"Insolent!" exclaimed the stranger, advancing towards the intruder with a haughty menacing aspect; "What means this visit? Have I not already warned you?"

"Softly—softly," replied the unabashed attorney, casting a shrewd glance at his tenant's emaciated figure; "I am not the man to be frightened by a few hard words. My errand here is one of justice. Mark me, sir, of justice—and, storm and bluster

as you may, you shall not prevent me from discharging my duty. No, no, Mr. Glendovery."

"Glendovery!" faltered the stranger, quailing beneath the searching gaze of Evans; "what do you mean, sir? My name is Dwarrys."

"I care not what it is now. My business concerns what it was eighteen years ago. Doubtless, sir, you remember that about that period your——"

"I do—I do," said the conscience-striken man, flinging his clenched hands above his head, and staggering as if he had been shot; "he died a natural death. Who dares say he did not?"

"I said nothing about a natural death, sir."

"No—no; nor I either. But my thoughts are troubled. I scarce know what I am saying."

"I can account for your agitation, Mr. Glendovery," said the attorney, with an ironical smile.

"Villain! repeat but that word again, and, by the God above us, I lay you dead at my feet." And, snatching up a pistol from the table, the stranger presented it at the attorney's head.—"Now, sir," he added; "dare but to breathe but one syllable of that detested name again, and I send this bullet through your skull."

"Hah, indeed!" exclaimed Evans, at the same time drawing out the skull from his pocket, and holding it up full in the stranger's face—"fire, then! It will not be your first murder!"

A loud piercing yell burst from the stranger, as he beheld this ghastly memento. The pistol dropped from him, and, staggering to the table, he buried his face in his hands, and groaned as if his every limb and muscle were convulsed and quivering on the rack.

"So!" muttered Evans to himself, as he beheld this spectacle of heart-rending agony—"so! that shaft has struck home, I think. He will scarcely raise his head again;—no, pride has got a fall, and a devil of a fall it is. But, mercy on us! who could have supposed such a thing possible? A murderer! The murderer of his own brother!—Horrible! Yet, curse me if I can help feeling for him after all," continued the good-natured fellow, as, his first burst of exultation having subsided, a kindlier

spirit came over him; "I hated him while he affected the superior, and treated me as if I were so much dirt beneath his feet; but now that he is helpless and in my power—now that one word from me can clap the hangman's rope about his neck, curse me if I think I shall be able to bring myself to pronounce it. Were he in sound health, I would do so without a moment's hesitation; but he is dying—dying as fast as man can die; broken-hearted, too, and suffering the torments of the damned; and I 'm not the man to shorten the few hours he has left him. I know, I feel, I ought to act otherwise, but I was always a soft-natured fool;" then, addressing himself to the stranger, he added, "Mr. Glen—Dwarrys, I mean—Pray sir, be composed; it is ill grieving for what can't be remedied. Poor fellow, he hears me not; well, it can't be helped—but, from my soul, I pity him."

It is easy to pity those who no longer have it in their power to affect our interests, or wound our self-love. In the majority of cases, pity is but contempt with its sharp edge taken off—a flattering conviction of our strength and our adversary's weakness; of our triumph, and his humilation.

"Pity!" said the stranger, harping on Evans's last words, and staring wildly about him, "who talks of pity? Pity for a convicted murderer! Nay, never start, man, as if you had only just now discovered that I was an assassin. Could you not see 'fratricide' branded on my brow? Why, my own glass has shown it to me daily these eighteen years past!"

As he said these words, his eye happened to fall on the yellow mouldering skull which Evans still retained in his hand. "Hah!" he continued, "that fiend's face again! Grinning, too, and from malice! Away with it, sir, away; the very sight chills me to the bone;" and, wresting it from the attorney's grasp, he dashed it on the floor, and, with the frenzied rage of one possessed, ground it to atoms beneath his tread.

But this paroxysm was too violent to last long: and, in a few minutes, as if ashamed of such an outbreak in the presence of the man whom of all others he had most detested, he observed, in a more placid tone, with something of his usual hauteur, "I am not apt to be thus unmanned, Mr. Evans, but your discovery of the dreadful secret which I had hoped would have been buried

with me in that grave to which I am fast hastening, has called up recollections which it maddens me even to think of. I ask not when, or by what means, you made this discovery; enough for me to know that you have made it, and that, in revenge for fancied affronts, you have resolved on denouncing me to the world. Speak, sir, is it not so?"

"Such was my intention," said the attorney, "but—but—nay, d—n it, what's the use of mincing matters—in one word, then, Mr. Glen—Dwarrys, I mean—I am at this moment in, what you call, a predicament. Duty pulls me one way, humanity another. Duty says, 'give him to justice;' humanity, 'leave him to himself, for his days are already numbered;' and I much fear—that is to say, I am quite positive—that humanity will get the better of me."

While the attorney thus spoke, the stranger kept his eye fixed on him with an expression of mixed surprise and distrust. At length, after a pause, during which he walked up and down the room, as if he were endeavouring to force himself to some decisive line of conduct, he said, "I appreciate your forbearance, sir, and will prove to you that I am not wholly unworthy of it. As yet you know but one part of my secret—the nature of the crime committed; you are yet to learn the extent of the provocation received. Listen then to what I am going to say. Return to this house to-morrow night, when I will acquaint you, fully and unreservedly, with the whole sad story of my life—'t will be a dreadful task, but what penance is too severe for a wretch like me?—that, after my death, should you ever recall me to your mind, you may remember me as one who, great as was his crime, deserved rather your compassion than abhorrence. Will you agree to my proposal?"

The attorney hesitated, for the stranger's manner, especially the emphatic and half-sneering way in which he pronounced the word "compassion," struck him with distrust.

"What, are you afraid?" exclaimed the stranger, mistaking the cause of his hesitation.

"No," replied Evans, indignantly, "I never yet feared mortal man, least of all, a"—then, checking himself, he added, "I will agree to your proposal."

"And you will swear till to-morrow night to preserve the strictest secrecy?"

"I will."

"Then farewell, sir, till to-morrow night."

"I don't half like his manner," said Evans, as he closed the hall-door, "for there 's something in the wild glare of his eyes that convinces me he 's half-cracked at times. Well, I must be on my guard; these moonstruck fellows have all the craft of the devil about them. Egad, if he 's no care for his own life, I have for mine; so caution 's the word. Let me see; how shall I proceed? I have it," he added, after a brief interval of cogitation; "now, if he means me foul play, he shall find I am his match. One must not suffer for one's good-nature."

## CHAPTER VI.

But a few hours had elapsed since the circumstances mentioned in the last chapter, yet what a change had that brief period wrought in the stranger's appearance! His cheeks were drawn in; his white clammy forehead seemed as though the impress of the grave were on it; there was a strange unnatural light in his dilated eye; and his voice trembled from suppressed emotion. Evans found him, as before, seated alone at a table, on which a lamp barely emitted glimmer enough to show the cheerless condition of the half-furnished apartment. As he entered, the stranger rose, and, grasping him by the arm, said, "Are we alone in this house?"

"Yes."

"And no one tracked you here, nor knows aught of the subject of our last night's conference?"

"I have not breathed a syllable about it to a single human being."

"I thought I heard a footstep on the lawn under the window," said the stranger—so apprehensive an ear has conscience.

"'T is merely the wind; the night threatens a storm."

"Then 't is the fitter for me to say what I have to say. Now listen," continued the stranger, "and, be your feelings what they may, be sure you do not interrupt me. Should you see me ex-

cited—maddened even with the recollections you have yourself called up—take no heed, for the fit will soon pass off," and so saying, with a determined effort at self-composure, the stranger commenced as follows:—

"My name, as you have but too truly surmised, is Glendovery, and I was born in this very house. My mother died in giving me birth. I have been told that she was a cold, reserved, imperious woman; and that I resembled her as closely in character as in countenance—a circumstance to which I attribute my father's early dislike to me; for his marriage having been one of convenience, not love, was consequently a most unhappy one. My oldest recollections can carry me back to no one act of kindness shown me by my father, who lavished all his affections on my elder brother—a jovial mettlesome young fellow, cast, like himself, in the rudest mould, and as selfish as those are apt to be, who, from their very cradle, have recognised no will but their own.

In due time we were both sent to school at Caermarthen, where my brother soon became a favourite, for commonplace joined with animal spirits is ever popular. He was foremost in every frolic, and I was rendered perpetually uneasy by the comparisons which our playmates were always instituting between him and me. I could not—say rather, I would not—join in their pursuits; I could not sympathise or exchange minds with them; but lived moodily apart in a world of my own, like a hermit in his lone cell, conscious of possessing faculties superior to the herd with whom I was daily brought into contact. These faculties I invigorated by hard study, though my reading, sooth to say, was desultory, and chiefly of that sort which quickens the fancy and calls forth the passions, rather than feeds or disciplines the judgment. Yet even study, which you would suppose would have been my blessing, proved only an added source of annoyance. My school-master, like most provincial pedagogues, was a conceited ignoramus—a mixture of the pedant, the despot, and the sycophant—who had no notion of boys presuming to get on without his help, or acquire other knowledge than he could furnish them with; consequently he was always venting his spleen in contemptuous allusions to my genius, which he did with the

greater relish, from having accidentally made the discovery that my brother was the favourite son.

"The first serious shock my feelings ever received was on my return home for the midsummer holidays. The excitement of the journey, and the utter change of scene from the dull discipline of a school, to the comparative freedom of home, had kindled all my more social feelings; and when I entered my father's presence, it was with my heart in my eyes, and my hands eagerly stretched out to receive his cordial grasp. And how was I welcomed? Not with positive unkindness, but worse—far worse—with quiet apathy. He coldly held out his hand, with the expression of a hope that "school had improved my temper;" while, for my brother, he reserved his warmest greetings—his sunniest smiles. Well do I remember the bitterness of that moment! I quitted the room with affected unconcern, but no sooner did I reach my chamber, than all my pride gave way, and I burst into a passion of tears. When we met again at dinner, I endeavoured to appear indifferent, as if my feelings had sustained no blow; but the very effort only rendered me more embarrassed; and that which was sheer sensibility was of course attributed to sulkiness. Ah, if parents would but bear in mind that they never check a generous feeling in their children but they quicken the growth of a bad one, how much shame, and guilt, and anguish, would human nature be spared!

"About the period of my nineteenth year my father died, and, true to his predilections, left his whole fortune—which, by the by, was not much—to my elder brother. Here was a blow to all my prospects! True, my father had expressed a wish in his will that a decent provision should be made for me; but this was optional with my brother; and I could not therefore but feel that I was become that most abject of animals—a poor relation, without the means of rescuing myself from my condition. My education could not avail me. It was any thing but practical; but, even had it been otherwise, so completely had my own moody nature, aggravated by the neglect of those who should have been my best friends, built up a wall of circumvallation between me and general society, that I had not the remotest possibility of being able to avail myself of such acquirements as I possessed.

"A few months after my father's death, the whole internal economy of our household was changed. The old man, with all his faults, had always been hospitable, but experience had taught him to temper discretion with liberality. With my brother, it was otherwise. He was a reckless spendthrift. The house was now filled with fellows after his own heart—strollers, poachers, small farmers, and the like—brawny, hard-drinking, bullet-headed vagabonds, who aped the vices of the squirearchy, without imbibing a tithe of their redeeming qualities. I would not herd with creeping things like these, and constant were the disputes between my brother and myself in consequence. I was too proud, he said, in his coarse blustering manner; I thought myself too good for them, whereas there was not one among them all who was not twice as rich—ay, and twice as clever too as myself. What was I fit for? Could I throw a line, or spear an otter, or shoe my own horse, or make my own flies? Not a bit of it. Why then did I give myself such airs?

"Led by this example, my brother's companions made a point of treating me, not with downright insult—for the ruffians had just tact enough to see that there was a strong spice of the devil in my nature—but with petty indirect incivilities, till one evening, when, contrary to my wont, I was seated at table with them, one of the squad, half-drunk, insulted me so grossly, that I rose from my seat, and felled the brute to the earth. The whole party was of course in arms. My brother stormed and swore, but, satisfied with my revenge, I let him sputter on as he pleased, and next day the thing was passed off as a drunken frolic, though not without increasing the estrangement between Hugh and myself.

"A circumstance occurred about this time that deepened that estrangement to hatred, at least on my part. During my school-days, I had formed one of those fanciful attachments, which boys are so apt to give way to, for a young girl, the only daughter and heiress of a widow of some property at Caermathen, who had been acquainted with my mother, and at whose house I was a welcome guest whenever a half-holiday allowed me to visit there. This acquaintance I kept up long after my final return home, and would often cheer my flagging spirits by looking for-

ward to a union with Charlotte Lewis, whose mother, if she did not absolutely favour, did not disapprove my advances. But my father's will soon dispelled this dream, for no sooner did Mrs. Lewis, who was a shrewd worldly woman, become acquainted with it, than she gradually weaned her daughter from my society. My brother had some suspicion of this, but never dreamed of substituting himself, until the embarrassments in which he was now plunged compelled him to turn his thoughts to matrimony.

"Such was his position, when, at a race-ball at Caermarthen, he happened to meet Charlotte Lewis, whom he had not seen since he left school. He was struck with her beauty, fascinated by her sprightliness; and, being received by the mother as elder brothers usually are on such occasions, proposed at once, and was accepted. Did the weight of my indignation fall on the girl for this act of arch coquetry? No; her loss I could have borne, for I had long since found out that she was a mere simpering boarding-school automaton—one of those pretty patterns of commonplace, who dance, sing, paint flowers in albums, and languish over the sugary sentimentalities of love-tales to convince themselves that they have a heart—but I could not bear my brother's triumph. It was here the shaft rankled. Again he stood between me and the sunshine. Was it not enough that he had stripped me of my fortune, but he must make even hope itself a bankrupt? Gentler natures might put up with such repeated provocations, but I would not; and, in the frenzy of my wrath, vowed a deadly revenge. Bear witness, ye moving imps, who nightly in the thick darkness make your visible presence felt, how sternly I have kept my word!

"All was now arranged for the marriage, which was to take place within the week. My brother was in high spirits at the idea—so much as to bear himself with something like courtesy towards me; and I, duly to keep up appearances, met his advances half-way. We had always indeed managed to keep our differences a secret from the neighbourhood—he from sheer indifference, and I from that habit of dissimulation which a long course of ill-treatment had taught me; and I was now to reap the benefit of my reserve.

"The evening but one preceding the wedding, as I was seated

alone in the drawing-room, my brother burst in, flushed with wine, full of wild glee, but at the same time in that feverish unbalanced state of mind, which the slightest contradiction is sufficient to stimulate to fury.

"'Huzza, huzza!' said he, drawing his chair to the table; 'give me joy, brother; all 's right—the lawyers have settled every thing, and in two days Charlotte Lewis will be—now, don't look so savage, Ned. If the girl prefers me to you, it's not my fault; besides, we can't have every thing our own way, you know'—and he eyed me, as I imagined, with a sneer of deliberate malice.

"I was stung to the quick by his look, but made no reply.

"'Come, come, Ned, don't be jealous, but try, for once in your life, to put on a smiling face. Let us see if a glass of wine won't cheer you. Come, you shall drink my health—not a word—by God you shall; I'll have no sulks to-night.'

"In vain I remonstrated, by telling him that he had already had more than enough; he would take no excuse—so, to prevent exposing myself by a premature quarrel, I gave in to his caprices.

"No sooner had the servant placed the wine on the table, than my brother drank off two glasses in rapid succession; and then, pushing the bottle towards me, said, 'Now, Ned, my boy, fill up—no heel-taps; I know you're a sly dog, but—capital! that's well toss'd off; so, fill again—to the brim—to the brim, for I'm going to propose a toast.'

"'And I am ready to do every justice to it, provided,' I added—for I half apprehended its import—'it be nothing objectionable.'

"'Objectionable! Who talks of objection here? Am I not master in my own house?' and, putting on an air of drunken authority, he rose from his seat, and, holding up his bumper, exclaimed, 'Charlotte Lewis!'

"'Damn her,' said I, indignantly turning down my glass; 'never!'

"'Why, you—you—you—beggar!' roared my brother, trembling and stuttering with rage; 'do you refuse!'

"'Hah, beggar! Is it come to this?'

"'Yes, beggar! Are you not dependent on me for every thing you have in the world, even to the very coat on your back?'

"'Mean blustering poltroon, is it for you to boast of the advantages which luck alone has given you? Had our common father done justice to us both, you would never have dared to offer me this insult. But beware, brother, it is easier to raise the devil than to allay him.'

"'What, do you threaten too? Take that;' and, staggering across the table, the ruffian aimed a blow at my head, which, for the moment almost stunned me.

"My first impulse was to rush on him and tear him to atoms—for I felt as if he would have been a mere reed in my grasp—but in an instant I had recovered my self-possession, and, giving him a look that pierced him even through the thick fencings of his drunkenness, left the apartment, as tranquilly to all external appearance as if no dispute had taken place between us.

"Night was now drawing on—a black sultry night, charged with storm—a night when the murderer wakes to count the leaden hours, while conscience thunders in his ear like the trump of doom. How the wind sang through the old walnut-trees! The owl, too, kept whooping from the grey belfry, and, as I paced alone across the lawn, methought I heard a brother's death-knell in her whoop. Did I strive to dispel this idea? Not so. I hugged it to my bosom with all the force of a conviction. To be scorned—pitied—treated as a menial—trampled on as a beggar—ay, 'beggar' was the very phrase he used!—struck too—a Glendovery struck, and by his own!—but no, it cannot be, for he is already dead. 'Poor fellow,' I added, with bitter irony, anticipating my revenge, 'how still he lies! Fie, brother, bestir yourself; your bride is at the altar. Alas, he hears me not! That blow has struck home to more hearts than one.'

"As I re-entered the house, I met one of the servants, who, struck I suppose with my air, said, 'What ails you, Master Edward?'

"'Nothing—nothing,' I replied, carelessly, 'but poor Hugh, I fear, will ail something to-morrow, for I never saw him so intoxicated.'

"'Ay, the old story; I have just left him fast asleep on the sofa; pity he did not take your advice, and let well alone; one would have thought his last attack of apoplexy would have made him more cautious; but, I say, wern't you both quarrelling a short while since?'

"'Quarrelling! No! laughing—shouting—singing—Oh, we had a rare half hour of it.'

"'Yes, that I'll be sworn you had; but I must not stay gossiping here, for I've got to go down to the farrier's about your brother's bay colt; so, good-night, Master Ned, good-night;' and off went the old man.

"No sooner was he gone, than I crept up into my own room, where the very first object on which my eyes fell—as I live, sir, 't is the fact!—was a long sharp-pointed nail which lay glittering in the middle of the floor—the portrait of my grandfather which it had upheld having been taken down by my desire that very morning, in order that the dusty frame might be cleaned. The instant I caught sight of this nail, I stood as one spellbound. How came it there? who placed it there? No matter; there it was. The devil never deserts his friends at a pinch.

"A murder was once perpetrated in Cornwall by similar means. 'T was years since I had read the narrative, but now it flashed vividly across my recollection with all its details, even down to the minute circumstance of the assassin's knocking off the brass head of the nail, for the more effectual purpose of concealment.

"'T was a bright idea, but crime is ever fertile in expedients.

"Hark, what sound is that? Fool, 't is but the wind; and crawling, meekly, slowly, step by step—as a beggar should do—with my head turned, now to one side, and now to the other, I stooped, and picked up the nail. It had a strange feel, and as I pressed its sharp point against my finger, I felt as if I were dallying with the fangs of a viper.

"The hammer which had dislodged the instrument from the wall still lay on one of the chairs. 'Why, this is better still,' said I; and clutching it with a hurried grasp, while at the same time, like my prototype in guilt, I knocked off the brass head of the nail, I hid both beneath my coat, and stole down stairs into

the room where Hugh still lay sleeping. A lamp stood on the table, lighting up his flushed features. I moved towards the sofa, firm of purpose, yet trembling, nevertheless, like an aspen-leaf, when, just as I was within a yard of my victim, I heard voices at the door, and flew instantly for concealment behind the long flowing curtains.

"'Had we not better wake him?' said one of the servants; 'he may have another fit else;' at the same time laying his hand on the door-handle.

"'No,' said another, 'he does not like to be disturbed; better let him wake at his own hour;' and, so saying, the speakers retired in the direction of the kitchen.

"I waited till I had heard the last sound of their retreating tread, and then emerging from my hiding-place, bent over the sleeper's body. All was now hushed as death, except the mouse shrilly shrieking behind the wainscot; and as I gazed on the doomed man buried in such deep repose, the recollection of the still deeper one in which I was about to plunge him struck to my heart, and, for the moment, I half repented of my design. But that taunt—that blow too—that cursed blow—no, no, these were stains only to be wiped out by blood.

"While I thus stood, resolute, yet still procrastinating, my victim happened to mutter in a scornful tone of voice, blended with laughter, the word 'beggar.'

"This taunt extinguished the last lingering spark of pity in my breast. I was now no longer a man, but a demon. Do you see me glaring, like a hungry tiger, on my victim? Do you see me steal crouching towards him? Now, now, I am stooping right above his head. The nail is at his ear! Hark, do you not hear the fierce sudden strokes of the hammer—how the sharp iron goes crashing and grinding through the skull, right into the very centre of the brain? 'T was bravely done; was it not? And how he stared! My God, how he stared! A hideous convulsion shook him from head to foot; the blood surged upwards to his eyes—his lips—his brow—his ears—everywhere but to that one well-concealed little wound that let out life; he heaved a long thrilling sigh; then lay stretched a corpse before me!

"And *here*, in this very room, where we now sit face to face

—at this very hour—nay, in this very spot," continued the murderer, a strange expression of half-smothered fright whitening his countenance, "was that deed perpetrated! Can you wonder, then, that I do constant penance here?" Then, breaking into an hysterical laugh—"Penance! hah! hah! Well may hell's vaults ring with laughter at such mockery!

"No sooner was my revenge consummated, than all the stormy passions of my nature at once subsided, and remorse usurped their place. Oh, the horror of those returning moments of humanity! I slunk up stairs to bed, but not to sleep—no, not to sleep; my imagination was on the rack; my brain whirled round like a mill-wheel; I felt that I was on the verge of madness.

"In this state, with a burning sense of suffocation besides, as if some bony skeleton fingers were clutching at my throat, I flew for relief to the window. But this only aggravated my torments. Ghastly shapes seemed careering in mid-air; the atmosphere smelt of blood; and a voice, heard far above the sounding organ-like roll of the thunder, demanded my brother at my hands. Conscience-stricken, I returned to my couch, where I lay cowering beneath the clothes, wishing each hour might be my last. Once in my agony I clapsed my hands in prayer, but scarcely had I muttered a few indistinct words, when a low mocking laugh rung in my ear, and close beside me stood—my brother! What, was I indeed no murderer? I looked again. The shape was gone. Gone! Oh no; brothers should stick close to each other, and mine never quits—ah, 't is there again! Away, pale shade, away!" And, staring wildly about him, the stranger waved off some form that seemed hovering at his elbow.

Evans was too much shocked to say a word. The murderer's narrative seemed absolutely to have frozen his blood.

"Mr. Glendovery," he at length stammered out, "for God's sake, sir, be——"

"Glendovery! Who calls Glendovery? My name is Cain. Look here—here"—dashing his double fists against his forehead—"see, the name is written here, traced in burning characters by God's own hand——"

"Pray, sir, I entreat—I implore you, be composed——"

"Again! that voice again! Ah! too well I know that voice! I have heard it in the still moonlight; amid storm and calm; by day and night; on land and sea; and yet once more—oh, my brain—my brain!"

The wretched man here made a pause, his self-control, which, with the stern energy peculiar to his character, he had managed to keep in tolerable check up to this moment, having now wholly deserted him. He covered his face with his spread hands, while his fingers worked, and his shoulders heaved, as if under the influence of an epileptic fit. In a briefer space, however, than would have been supposed, the convulsion passed off, and, motioning Evans—who was again beginning to offer consolation—to silence, he resumed, in a more tranquil tone, as follows:—

## CHAPTER VII.

"I pass by the discovery, with all the circumstances connected with it, of my brother's death: enough to state that it was attributed to apoplexy, brought on by habitual intemperance, and that the bitter agony I testified on the occasion was charitably laid to the score of my fraternal affection.

"On the day after the funeral, at which, had the slightest suspicion existed, I should infallibly have betrayed myself, I sent for your father, and, on the pretext that excess of grief would not allow me to continue longer in a scene fraught with such heart-rending recollections, I disposed of the Manor-House and the few remaining acres attached to it for little more than half their value, and, just waiting till the transfer was completed, posted off for the metropolis, with the firm intention of never again setting foot in the principality.

"Arrived in London, I plunged into every species of dissipation. But in vain. Nothing had power to allay the settled fever of my mind. In the midst of society I was perpetually haunted by an apprehension of discovery; not a random glance was directed towards me but I fancied a shrewd significance lurked beneath it; the laugh and the jest rung in my ears like an insult; reserve alarmed me; frankness seemed a snare to draw

me out; in short, I felt safe only when alone—yet, when alone, I was most miserable, for then the spectre Memory came stalking forth among the haunted ruins of my mind; and hope, fancy, feeling, all that lends sunshine to life, and wings to time, drooped and died beneath her frown.

"Thus restless and despair-stricken, I flew for refuge to travel; but after wandering over a considerable portion of the Continent, and still finding no respite from remorse, I gave up all further idea of struggling with my destiny, and settled on the banks of the Lake of Constance.

"Here, for three long monotonous years, I lived the life of a solitary. Society was offered me, but I rejected the proffered boon with disgust, preferring rather the companionship of my own thoughts, cheerless as these were, and dark as was the cloud they threw around my prospects. Occasionally, in my more tranquil moments, which, like birds of passage, visited me but for a brief space, then were again on the wing, I would beguile my solitude by study, and thus awhile divert my mind from the contemplation of that last resource of the hopeless—suicide. The time, however, was at hand when the misanthropist was to be humanised—you stare, sir, as if that, in my case, were impossible, but 't is even so—the lost soul to be brought within the cheering influences of hope; my intellectual identity to be no longer recognisable; and the first words of kindness which I had ever heard from the lips of human being, to draw forth feelings which I scarcely knew I possessed.

"Towards the close of my third year's residence at Constance, an old French officer, with his only daughter, came to reside in the neighbourhood. They were retired unassuming people, partial, like myself, to solitude. Many an evening I used to encounter them in my rambles along the picturesque borders of the lake, on which occasions we would exchange a few courteous commonplaces, cordial enough on the part of Colonel Delarbe, and, after a time—for I was slow to admit even the most distant approach to acquaintance—by no means insincere on mine.

"It was impossible, indeed, for me not to take an interest in my new neighbours, for the father was a gentleman in the most comprehensive sense of the term; and the daughter, so far at

least as appearances could help me to a conclusion, one of the gentlest and purest of her sex. How shall I describe the refined qualities of her mind, or the faultless beauty of her countenance? The latter was full of witchery in every phase of its expression. At times I persuaded myself that she looked most lovely when most serious; but then she would smile, and shake conviction by that new fascination. Her eyes were Madonna-like in their meek character; her sunny chestnut tresses, luxuriant as the tendrils of the vine; her figure all grace and airiness; and she had the buoyant elastic tread of a young Dryad. And then her voice! so clear, so sweet, so like the soft breathings of a flute heard across waters on a still summer evening—even now it rings, and will ring for ever in my memory. Yet hers were not the charms that take your fancy by storm, and awe you into instant idolatry, but those rather which win their gradual way by the absence of all pretension, which to see *once* may be perhaps to forget, but to become familiar with, is ever after to enshrine in your heart of hearts.

"Reserved, ascetic as I was—hating myself, and, as a necessary consequence, hating others—maddened, too, by the recollection of Charlotte Lewis, from whom I had formed my estimate of woman—still it was not in my power to keep up a repellant demeanour whenever in the course of my daily strolls I met the Delarbes. Sympathy is as great a help to friendship as to love, and there was a warmth in the manner of my neighbours that convinced me they were aware I was unhappy, and would fain render me otherwise. Yet they did not intrude their courtesies, or parade their sensibilities. It was by their looks, the tones of their voices, and the frankness of their greetings, that I discovered I held no mean place in their esteem.

"And so months rolled on, each day drawing us insensibly closer and closer together, until at length I became a visitor at their cottage. From this period I began to be an altered, though not yet a happy, man. No, happiness was still but a dim figure on the extreme horizon; but in her stead came a serene thoughtful melancholy, for which, as it was unusual in one of my age, I felt it necessary to allege some reason. When, therefore, I became intimate with the Delarbes, I accounted for my gloom, by

stating that I had unfortunately killed a friend in a duel, which had entailed on me the necessity of flying the country. The colonel heard my statement with indifference, for among military men affairs of honour are almost matters of course; but his daughter, I feared, would have received it with far different feelings. But no; she was affected with the apparent intensity of my remorse; and with the usual disposition of woman to put the most generous construction on the errors of those whom they admit to their esteem, made a thousand excuses for my conduct, fully persuading herself, from what she already knew of my character—she knew, poor girl!—that I was more sinned against than sinning in the affair.

"How humanising is the influence of a beautiful and virtuous woman! The society of Marie almost reconciled me to myself. We were constantly together, now strolling along the green lawny slopes, bosky dells, and flower-bedropt meadows of Constance; now through its quaint old-fashioned town; and now sailing over the ample bosom of its lake; sometimes accompanied by Colonel Delarbe, but far oftener without him, until hope, long dormant, ventured to put forth a few timid shoots in my breast, and suggest to me the probability of this sweet communion enduring through life.

"Within a short day's journey of the Lake of Constance lie the mineral baths of Pfeffer, situated in the heart of a mountainous district; and half-way up a deep black glen, walled in on either side by a lofty range of perpendicular rocks. These baths constitute the 'lion' of the neighbourhood; of course, therefore, I could not be a resident at Constance and not visit them—so it was arranged one day that the Delarbes and myself should go and explore their romantic site. We did so, and were well rewarded for our curiosity, for the bath is a strange uncouth pile of building, hollowed out of the solid rock, chill, damp, and looking a very Tartarus in its gloom. When we had sufficiently examined this architectural phenomenon, we proceeded to explore the source of the mineral springs, which is an exploit by no means unaccompanied by danger, for you have first to cross a rickety bridge, and then to scramble along a plank hardly more than ten inches wide, and from five to six hundred

yards in length, that runs along the edge of the precipice; below which, at an awful depth, the river goes thundering in a succession of snowy cataracts, while, above, the rocks meet overhead at a height of upwards of two hundred feet. On reaching this plank, which leads direct into the cavern whence the springs issue, Marie, who, with her father, was close behind, implored me not to venture farther; but I would not be prevailed on, and accordingly made my way across, while she remained on the bridge, tremblingly watching my progress. As I was returning, and was within a few feet of my companions, my brain, bewildered by the stunning sound of the water, grew dizzy; I tottered, reeled like a drunkard, and should infallibly have been precipitated headlong into the Acherontic abyss, had not the intrepid girl rushed forward at the hazard of her life, seized me by the arm, and drawn me safely on to the bridge.

"This heroic proof of devotedness decided my conduct, and within a month from that day Marie and I were married, on which occasion I disposed of my own cottage, and removed to Colonel Delarbe's more commodious one. And now, for the first time in my life, I began to get cheering glimpses of happiness. Hope, like the sun-flower, darted a golden flash of light across my path. I took new views of men and things. The very face of nature was transfigured. The wind no longer sang a dirge in my ear; the stream, as it flowed past, no longer reminded me of joys passed too, never to return; its music was now attuned to a blythe strain, and health sported, like a Naiad, on the bosom of its breezy waters. And wherefore this strange revolution in my mind? Because Love, not Despair, was the telescope through which I looked abroad upon nature. Wherever I went, this divine spirit went with me. She pillowed on my bosom at night; she cheered me through the livelong day; she raised up the fallen humanity within me; hallowing, beautifying, and shedding a glory over all things by her presence. Oh, happy—happy days! Where are ye now, and where and what am I? Where is that radiant look which, ever when the dark hour came over me, could smile away the shadow from my brow, and fill its place with sunshine? Where are those soft pleading eyes which, for thirteen years, never turned towards me but in love? Where

is that sweet, liquid, silvery voice; where that fairy figure, whose every attitude was the soul of grace? Gone—all gone—never to be heard or seen again, save in dreams!

"I now hurry over a lapse of eight years, during which period I enjoyed as much repose of mind as was compatible with my nature, devoting my attention chiefly to the education of my only child—a fine auburn-haired boy, fresh as the morning, and rosy as the sun-turned cheek of a peach; the very image of his mother, both in person and disposition. In this darling child far more than my own youth seemed renewed. He was the pledge of my redemption—the bow of promise hung out in heaven to warn me that the stormiest portion of my life was past. His grandfather, who died the year after my marriage, had left him a competency when he should be of age, so that I was freed from all apprehension on this score, and could look forward to the time when he should become the main stay of my declining years. Never were spirits so elastic—laugh so joyous, as this dear child's. His very footstep—ah, what music is superior to the approaching tread of one we love?—would come growing on my ear like some jocund melody, or die away, as it retreated, like a faint knell. During my daily walks, for I was an indefatigable pedestrian, he was my constant companion; and, as he went bounding by my side, prattling, as this life were one long holiday, and filling my whole soul with sunshine, my very heart went down on its knees to Heaven for having vouchsafed me such a blessing. Often, for hours together, would I sit and watch him from our cottage window as he chased the butterfly across the lawn, or counted the white shining sails upon the lake; and when in the evening he knelt down at his mother's feet, with his little hands clasped in prayer, and his laughing eyes with difficulty subdued to gravity, I began to indulge a conviction that, for his dear sake, I should in time be pardoned.

"One of his favourite amusements was to accompany me in my sailing-boat across the lake. To this, however, I would sometimes object, but with little effect, for he would take no denial, and I had not the heart to refuse him. Late one autumnal afternoon, when he was seated beside his mother, looking over a small volume of prints which she was explaining to

him, he caught sight of me from the window as I was hurrying towards the lake, and, bounding out of the room before Marie could stop him, came up with me just as I reached the spot where my boat was moored. The wind being light and regular, I allowed him to accompany me, and, putting up a sail, we were soon carried far into the lake. After tacking about for an hour and upwards, I was preparing to return to land, when, before I was aware of it, the sail jibbed, and my boy, who was shifting his seat at the moment, lost his balance, and was precipitated into the water. In an instant I plunged after him; caught him as he was in the act of sinking for the last time, and then, with difficulty regaining the boat, deposited my senseless burden at the bottom, with his head pillowed on my own coat; shook out every reef in the sail, and shot shoreward with the speed of an arrow.

"On reaching home I sent off for a medical neighbour, by whose timely aid my darling was soon recovered; but, alas! about a week after the accident, we found his appetite begin to fail, and his laughing eye to grow dull, while a numbing leaden apathy succeeded his former vivacity.

"'T is the scarlet-fever he has got,' said the physician, in reply to my anxious enquiries; 'nevertheless, there is no cause for apprehension; his constitution is in his favour; and in a few days, by good nursing, I have no doubt we shall bring him round.'

"Accordingly, by day and night, Marie and myself held one long unbroken vigil by our child's bed-side, and never was child so patient—so grateful for our attention. Even when exhausted with pain he had still a languid smile for us; and when he saw me, overcome with apprehension, bury my head in the pillow, he would endeavour to raise himself, and, flinging his arms about my neck, whisper he was sure he should soon be well.

"On the fifth day the fever had made such alarming progress that the physician warned me to prepare myself for the worst. Oh God, I could not—dared not do so. What, the pride of my manhood—the hope of my age—the main link of the chain that held me to existence—the loved and lovely boy in whose welfare two hearts were bound up;—what, this child go, and leave us behind? No no—it could not be—I would not believe it.

"It was late in the evening, when we were keeping our usual watch by his pillow, that, on waking from a short feverish doze, we saw our child's eye begin to wander. Delirium had come on him, and he no longer knew us, though, even in his ravings, the words 'Papa,' 'Mama,' were constantly on his lips. My wife was the first to mark the change, which I no sooner saw, than I flung myself on my knees beside the bed, and prayed in a paroxysm of agony that the bitter cup might pass away. 'Great God,' I cried, 'spare this child! If one must suffer, let me be the victim. I am the guilty one. On me then shower down all the vials of your wrath, but for his innocent mother's sake, spare, oh spare this child!' Vain prayer! The sluggish night crawled on—day broke—attained its meridian—and travelled westward—yet still no change. There he lay, wholly unconscious of who watched beside him, freshening his furred lips, and pressing him to their heart of hearts, as though death could never seize him in that embrace.

"The next day wore on, and still no change; but towards evening his delirium began visibly to abate, and when our medical friend called, he comforted us by the assurance, that, if he had but strength enough to bear up, he might possibly recover. In an instant—so excited had been our feelings—we sprang from despair to confidence; and, in the wild glee of the moment, I insisted on Marie, who was now worn out with fatigue, taking a few hours' repose. With some reluctance she complied, and I sate up alone—no, not alone, for hope was with me—pouring balm into my troubled spirit.

"My boy, meantime, slept on, and I felt that such sweet slumber must be the harbinger of his recovery. Presently I saw him move, and the faint semblance of a smile light up his faded eye. Merciful powers! there was intelligence in his glance, and, as I bent over him, the tears of gratitude dropping fast down my cheeks, he put out his pretty pouting lip, and whispered, 'Don't cry, Papa, I shall be better soon;' and then, as if the effort were too much for him, sunk again into slumber.

"Oh, what a load was lifted from my mind when I beheld this encouraging symptom! 'Come,' said I, 'I too have earned the right of a few minutes' repose; I can afford to relax a little now,'

and, following Marie's example, I leaned back in my chair, and slept. How pleasant was that sleep, brief though it was, and snatched from the depths of despair! I dreamed that it was a cool fresh spring morning, and that I was taking a walk with my darling through meadows fed by cheerful waters, on whose surface the green dragon-fly sported, and which no sooner caught the young rogue's eye, than, attracted by its glitter, he flew after it, ankle-deep in flowers, shouting and laughing with all the irrepressible glee of childhood, while the wind blew about his glossy ringlets, and health's ruddiest glow blushed on his sweet face. Proud was I to witness his happiness; proud to hear the neighbours, as we returned home to breakfast, congratulate me on his recovery; and proud—oh very proud!—to see his fine, dark, earnest eyes thank them eloquently for their kindness to Papa.'

"From this exhilarating dream I was roused by the loud scream of Marie. 'Edward, Edward,' she said, wringing her hands in anguish—'look at our child! He does not stir! He does not even breathe! Can he be——'

"'Hush, hush, you silly girl, you will disturb him;' and I put my ear close to his mouth, to hear if I could catch even an indistinct respiration, while my wife, rushing to the table, snatched up the candle, and held it over the features of the unawakening child. Long and earnestly she gazed; but, alas! without avail, for there was not the slightest movement—not so much as a single pulsation. He lay like some exquisitely-chiselled marble, with the ringlets thickly clustering on his wan transparent brow; the heavy lids closed over his eyes, and a smile on his face, such as that which we see in the west, when the serene summer sun has just set. Driven to desperation by his perfect stillness, I shook him—raised up his head—called him wildly by his name; still no stir—still no symptom of vitality. Marie could bear this no longer; and, early as was the hour—it was but just daybreak—hurried off for the physician. Ah, long before she returned, the truth was but too well ascertained. My child was dead! Darling—darling boy! He had died at the very moment when, in dreams, his father had restored him. Yes, he through whose purer nature I had trusted to make atone-

ment to society; he whom I had so proudly reared as a hostage for my future conduct; he who had just taught me what it was to be a parent; who had almost reconciled me to myself; and who, I had hoped, would have closed my own eyes;—he, that white soul without a stain, whose eye had never looked otherwise than as his artless nature prompted;—he—the happy—the beautiful—the affectionate—was gone for ever. Perhaps, in his last agony, he had awoke, and looked round for that heartless—heartless parent who lay indolently sleeping beside him. Perhaps he had attempted to call on my name, and stretch out his feeble arms to give me one parting embrace, but, finding me not, had passed away into eternity, thinking himself deserted. And the next day was his birth-day!—Man—man, were you ever a father?

"When my wife returned with the doctor, she found me stretched, a raging lunatic, on the floor. I laughed—I shouted—I blasphemed—I invoked curses on myself and the whole world; and seizing the physician with the grasp of a lion, kept demanding him to surrender up my boy, till my strength failed, and I was carried senseless to bed.

"It was weeks before I fully regained my consciousness; but, when I did wake, I woke an altered man. My boy was gone; I had nothing henceforth to live for. True, my wife still survived, but she could not be to me what he had once been. She could not fill up the void his loss had made in my heart. I loved her—dearly loved her—but my child was the object of my idolatry. I lived but in him. I had no hope but through him. He had strengthened and confirmed all the nobler sensibilities which his mother had first called forth; and, his humanising influence removed, my old sullen habits, having no longer any thing to divert them, came back in the fuller force that they had been so long dispelled.

"Though I strove as much as possible to repress these feelings, yet Marie soon discovered that I was a changed man, and even increased my moroseness, by the meek but mute upbraidings of her countenance. Often I caught her in tears, returning from my boy's grave, and, on these occasions—strange as it may

seem—a maudlin peevishness would steal over me, just as though I were jealous of a mother's affection for her son.

"But another feeling of a worse character now began to steal over me. With the suspicion inseparable from guilt, I took into my head that, during my delirium, I had revealed that awful secret which I dared not even whisper to myself. When once this idea crossed my mind, it is astonishing how deep it struck its roots there. 'How grave,' said I, 'Marie looked this morning at breakfast! Methought, when she addressed me, there was something almost of sternness in her manner. There must be some cause for this;' and thus I went on tantalising myself, attributing that to abhorrence on my wife's part, which, had not my mind been perverted, I should have known was the combined result of grief, and my own altered conduct towards her. Ah, when confidence between man and wife is once blighted, it never blossoms again! The transient franknesses that may spring up afterwards are but as the scanty gleanings after the full harvest has been reaped.

"A whole year had now elapsed since my boy's death, and, though still attached—how could it be otherwise?—to his mother, yet had I ceased to feel that deep unreserved affection for her which I had once felt. We were no longer *one*, but *two*. Never was man more wretched than I at this period, for the one bright episode in the story of my life having been brought to a close, my thoughts relapsed into their old channel, no longer dwelling with hope on the future, but ever in despair on the past. Whenever I now addressed Marie, it was with a grave—not to say a formal—air, as if I were under a perpetual fear of committing myself; and this (so it appeared to her) studied coldness soon began to have a visible effect on her health. Our medical neighbour was the first to perceive this alteration, and, attributing it to the shock occasioned by our child's death, warned me that if I did not change the scene, he would not be answerable for my wife's life.

"To this I unhesitatingly assented, and as Marie embraced the proposal with equal eagerness, in the hope that it might be beneficial to us both, we let our cottage, and, after visiting Switzerland, Italy, and the Low Countries, took up our abode for three years in the south of France.

"During the first year or two of our wanderings, the incessant bustle in which we lived, seldom remaining more than a month in a place, produced an evident improvement in my wife's health; but when we had come to settle at Avignon, and had returned to our usual monotonous way of living, my gloom returned too, and, with it, my wife's indisposition. Yet, for a while, except in her hollow eye, and the subdued tones of her voice, once so joyous in their music, there were no outward traces of decay. The wound that was wearing her to the grave bled inwardly.

"'Edward,' she said to me, one evening, pressing gently my arm, 'it is useless longer to hide from you what you must too soon know. I am dying. You start, but it is even so. The shaft that pierced you has pierced me too, and in a short time we shall know each other no more. Yet I do not bewail my lot, for circumstances, to which I need not allude more particularly, have long since forced on my mind the sad conviction that I have not only lost my child, but my husband also.'

"'Lost me!' I replied: 'not so; I never loved you dearer than at this very moment, when you imagine me estranged from you. But grief, Marie, grief—undying grief has soured my temper, and made me seem what I am not, and never can be, my love, to you.'

"The evident sincerity with which I said this was not without its effect on my wife, and she resumed—'I do not blame you, Edward. Heaven knows I acquit you of want of feeling, but oh! I fear something dreadful, of which I must know nothing, has long been preying on your mind. I ask not your confidence, but, believe me, I am not unworthy to share it.'

"I was staggered by her earnestness, and for the moment hesitated what reply to make. But soon my stern indomitable pride decided me. Should I confess all, sink myself for ever in my wife's esteem, and perhaps break her heart by the communication? No, I would not. Be the consequences of my reserve what they might, I was resolved to preserve my character untarnished to the last.

"In pursuance of this determination, I endeavoured to laugh away Marie's suspicions, but the very way in which I did so

only served to strengthen them, and she replied, 'I would fain believe you, Edward, but, in spite of myself, my heart misgives me. During that dreadful illness of yours, which followed our——'

"'Hah! What of that illness? Speak, woman. Did I say any thing? Did I confess any thing in my delirium?'

"'No, no,' she answered, evasively, 'I meant not that. You said nothing—indeed you did not. Pray, pray look more kindly on me.'

"Her manner, though it did not altogether banish my distrust, yet, for the time, restored me to composure; so I contented myself with again conjuring her to dismiss all idea that I had ceased to love her, or that aught beyond grief was preying on my mind, and then turned the conversation to the state of her own health.

"She listened to me attentively, and with apparent conviction, and then, as if by mutual agreement, we dropped the subject for ever. That same week, however, her malady increased upon her, and made such rapid inroads on her strength, that at the month's end she was hardly able to leave her chamber. Bitter—most bitter—were my reflections at this moment. When I marked my wife's attenuated figure; her lustrous eye; the one burning hectic spot—death's crimson banner—on her cheek, I felt that I was her murderer—I, who was borne to be the curse of all connected with me.

"After a few months of suffering, borne with that patient uncomplaining gentleness of which nothing could deprive her, her disorder seemed to have sustained a check, and she seized the opportunity of requesting me to return with her to Constance.

"'Edward,' she said, 'I shall never live to see another spring; let me go back then to our dear, dear lake, and be buried in the same grave with my child. 'T is a silly fancy,' she added, with a wan smile, 'but I do not think I could rest in peace elsewhere.'

"Her dying wish was complied with, and the very next day we set out on our return to the cottage, whose threshold my poor wife was never again destined to pass alive. Yet she struggled to the last with her malady, holding out hope, for my sake, when hope was not, till at length the golden bowl was broken, and she quitted her transient home to take possession of her eter-

nal one. The evening before her death she grew perceptibly better; she even rose from her bed for the purpose, as she said, of paying a farewell visit to her child's grave; but the effort was beyond her strength; a relapse took place, and before morning her pure spirit had passed away. She died in my arms, conscious to the latest moment of her existence; her last glance fixed on me; her spectral hand clasped in mine; her last words breathing unalterable affection.

"And now all were gone! Wife—child—and, with them, love—hope—happiness—all, all had passed away, and I stood, in the autumn of my life as in its spring, a blighted solitary being. My heart was leafless; the green sap in my thoughts was dried up; I was a thunder-splintered yew withering alone in a churchyard. Constance, once so loved, was henceforth hateful to me; I remained, therefore, but to witness the last rites paid to Marie, then quitted it for ever. Day was just breaking, when, from a neighbouring height, I turned round to take a parting glance at the spot where reposed the ashes of the only two beings I had ever loved—who had ever loved me. Bright fell the sunshine on that still churchyard; but they felt it not; henceforth 't was deepest night with them—an eternal dreamless sleep; the laughing voice of spring—the raging winter wind—the chirp of birds—the stir of human footsteps above their heads—sunrise with its golden pomps, and twilight with its lengthening shadows, nothing should wake them more. They were gone to the phantom world, where sense is not—nor light, nor sound—nor joy, nor grief—nor hope, nor despair! Casting my eyes in another direction, I could see my own cottage, with the early smoke ascending from its chimney; and the white sails of the fishermen glistening on the bosom of that lake which I had so often crossed with Marie and her child. 'Blessed Elysium,' said I, as the carriage slowly bore me away, 'how many happy days have I not owed to you! There, in that sequestered silvan dwelling, with the lawn sweeping down towards the water, hope first stirred within me! There I first sought repose of mind, and found it. But the charm is broken now. Dear wife, still dearer child, farewell; we have parted to meet no more, for where you have gone I must never come;' and as this wintry conviction swept

howling across my brain, my heart became ice, and I felt as if all humanity were chilled for ever within me!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

When the stranger had come to an end with his narrative, he rose from his seat, and paced hurriedly up and down the room, as though he were desirous of banishing the many tender and mournful recollections it had conjured up. But for a while his efforts were fruitless. The father—the husband—got the better of the stoic and the misanthropist; he seemed choking with grief; and at last, retiring to a corner at the further extremity of the room, he fairly gave himself up to his emotions, and sobbed and wept like an infant. Bursts of tenderness like these, when they break out in dark rugged natures, like sunshine in the midst of a thunder-storm, for the moment sweep all before them. Who forgets the anecdote of Napoleon and the village-bells of Brientz? He was riding late one day over a battle-field, gazing stern and unmoved on the dying and the dead that strewed the ground by thousands about him, when, suddenly, "those evening bells" struck up a merry peal. The Emperor paused to listen; his heart was softened; memory was busy with the past; he was no longer the conqueror of Austerlitz, but the innocent happy school-boy at Brientz; and, dismounting from his horse, he seated himself on the stump of an old tree, and, to the astonishment of Rapp, who relates the circumstance, burst into tears.—The rock was smitten, and the living waters came gushing from it.

The attorney, affected by the stranger's anguish, was about to approach him, with a view of consoling him, after his own blunt homely fashion, when the wretched man, roused by the sound of his tread, turned fiercely round, and, indignantly brushing the tears from his eyes, said, "Resume your seat, sir, for I have yet much to tell you."

"Not now—not now—I have heard too much already; spare yourself then, if not me; these emotions will kill you else."

"My emotions!" replied the stranger, scornfully; "you are yet but a shallow judge of character, Mr. Evans. My late show

of softness has, I fear, deceived you. However, be that softness what it may, remember it was not I who volunteered a confession of it, but you who wrung it from me, and, such being the case, you quit not this room till you have heard me to a close."

"As you please, sir," said the attorney, disgusted with the stranger's inflexible pride and sternness, even while he compassionated his sufferings. Pride indeed, or rather revenge—two vices by no means uncommon in the Welsh character—were, after all, the only things of native growth in his heart. His was one of those fierce unyielding characters, which, like the oak, defy the tempest that has left them bare and branchless. As for the gentler sensibilities, they had been so effectually kept down and trampled on during his infancy and a great portion of his manhood, that, when they did strike late root in his breast, their growth, though rapid and promising while it lasted, was but brief, like that of seeds dropped on an uncongenial soil, which scarcely make their appearance above ground ere they droop and pass away.

When both parties had resumed their places, Evans, finding that the stranger, despite his well-meant hint to the contrary, was bent on making what he called "a clean breast of it," took the opportunity to ask him—though his voice faltered a little while he put the query—what could possibly have induced him to return to a spot fraught with so many frightful recollections.

This question startled the stranger, who was sunk in reverie. Rousing himself, however, and looking steadfastly at his catechist, while he pointed to the lamp on the table, he replied: "Do you see that blind predestined moth, impelled by the strange instinct of nature upon the very death which it most dreads? Just the same instinct, or fascination—call it by what name you please—that is now luring that insect to its destruction, lured me also to this spot. Fain would I have found a grave elsewhere, but an invisible monitor was ever at my elbow, whispering in my spell-bound ear that *here* my days were destined to have an end; that detection in this sure disguise, which sorrow had flung round me, was impossible; and that if I hoped for pardon, here, where the crime was committed, here must the expiation

be made. And am I not hourly making this expiation? I, who, in order to acquit myself with éclat"—and here the stranger laughed convulsively—"forego even the tempting luxury of suicide? What, compared to mine, is the penance of your Catholic devotee? He scourges his body, I my soul. He, the fanatic, braves the midnight in the lone chapel before the cross—I, the murderer, brave it in the haunted home of the murdered! But enough of this," continued the desperate man, assuming an abrupt gaiety, which was even more withering than his despair; "in discoursing with my guest, I must not forget that I am his host;" and, so saying, he quitted the room.

He was absent only about ten minutes, yet, when he returned, his manner, and even his countenance, had undergone a startling change. His cheeks were white as those of a corpse; there was a fixed stony stare in his eye; and his whole air was that of one in whom the promptings of a better nature have been struggling, but in vain, with some inflexible tenacity of purpose. Evans looked at him with astonishment. "Can this be the man," he thought to himself, "who, but a short while since, was melted to almost woman's weakness? Why, he 's no more like what he was, when he was telling me about his child, than I am like a goat! Well, grief plays strange tricks with us all."

Meantime, the stranger had resumed his seat at the table, and placing on it a bottle nearly full of red wine, together with two of those capacious goblets which were in fashion among the Welsh squirearchy during the last century, he filled them both with wine, and handed the smallest of the two to Evans; but, as if instantly recollecting himself, he exchanged it for the larger one, saying, with a forced effort at calmness, "Take this, man; this—nay, no excuse; you are my guest, you know, and the best that I have is of course yours;" and bowing with an air of studied courtesy to Evans, he emptied his own goblet at a draught.

The sudden familiarity of the stranger's manner, together with the visible trembling of his hand as he handed the glass to the attorney, at once revived all the latter's distrust. He hesitated accordingly to follow his example—more especially when he saw, or fancied he saw, that the wine in his own goblet was of a deeper tint than that in the bottle—and he was about plead-

ing indisposition as an excuse, when a noise, apparently in the lawn below, drew his host's attention to the window. Evans seized the favourable opportunity, and emptied his glass quietly and dexterously into the dust and ashes on the hearth, just as the stranger, satisfied that his ears had deceived him, had returned to his place.

"So," said he, looking at the emptied goblet, while his eyes gleamed with a sudden wild light like a maniac's, when his fit is coming on him, "you have done justice to the good wine, I see."

"Yes," replied the attorney, smacking his lips with well-affected relish, and capital it is."

"Yet it is apt to disagree with *some* constitutions," replied the stranger, with a sneer; then raising his voice, he continued, "do you remember the old Spanish legend of the monk and the devil?"

"No," said Evans, wondering what was to come next.

"Listen then. Confident in his own superior sagacity, the ghostly father one day took it into his head that he could fathom the character and designs of the Tempter, who had assumed the disguise of an anchorite, and taken up his abode in a lone cave near the monk's convent. 'T was a foolish curiosity, and how, think you, was it rewarded?"

"I know not."

"Why, the Devil allowed himself to appear the dupe; lured the officious fool to his cell; and then——"

"Well, and what then?"

"*The monk was never seen alive again!*" was the reply, delivered in a low thrilling whisper, like an adder's hiss, "for the floor of that solitary cave kept well its secret, as the vaults of this house may do. Yes, fool," pursued the stranger with frantic vehemence, "meddling mischievous fool, that monk's fate is yours! It was to throw you off your guard that I revealed to you my life's tragedy, which, stamped as it was throughout with truth, I was resolved you should never live to make public. Did you imagine that I would have betrayed that awful secret to you which I withheld from the wife of my own bosom?—surrender up my pride—my character—nay, my very life itself, into your

custody, if I had not made sure of my victim? I hated you from the first moment I beheld you; and I now hate you with a deadlier rancour than ever, for your knowledge of my crime, and the weakness into which you have betrayed me."

"Mr. Glendovery," replied Evans, calmly interrupting this frenzied burst, "I have given you no cause for such hatred. True, when I first sought you, it was with hostile feelings; but I have since heard your confession, and I pity more than I condemn."

"Pity, wretch! I scorn your pity—I defy it—I loathe it—as I do all that wears the human form, for that mean mischievous curiosity which has forced me to wrench open the cells of memory, and expose the ghastly objects that lie there. But you shall not live to exult in your triumph. No, at this very moment death is at work within you. In the draught you but just now drained to the dregs, lurked a subtle poison which I had reserved for my own use, but which——"

"What, you confess, then?" said Evans eagerly.

"Yes, fool; but to whom? To the dead, and they tell no tales."

"The dead!" said the attorney, starting from his seat; "not so, man of blood. Though you feel persuaded that you have perpetrated a second murder—and on him, too, who, despite his conscience, would have stood between you and the scaffold—yet your craft has for once overreached itself. The poison you designed for me now lies among those ashes."

For an instant the stranger stood like one stupified; at length, "Hah, is it even so?" he shouted, while his red dilated eye kindled like a live coal; "there is then no way left but this;" and rushing on Evans, and seizing him like a tiger by the throat, he was within an ace of throttling him—so sudden had been his assault, and such energy had frenzy lent to his emaciated frame—when the man by a desperate effort shook off his grasp, and, hurrying to the window, gave a long shrill whistle.

"Lost—irrecoverably lost—Oh God!" exclaimed the stranger; while at that moment a rush of footsteps was heard on the staircase; the door flew wide open, and the sexton and the apothecary entered the room.

"Seize that murderer," said Evans.

The men advanced to arrest the maniac—for such he now really was, baffled revenge having given the last stunning shock to a brain already more than half shattered—but, glaring on them as if his very look had power to kill, they were so shocked by the expression of his countenance, that they stood stock still, as if rooted to the ground.

"Hah! hah!" shouted the madman, pointing towards Evans, who stood in deep shadow near the door, hesitating how to act, "so you have come at last. Well, I have been a long time expecting you. They told me you were dead. But what of that? The dead can walk. Is it not so, brother? Yet wherefore that spectral look? I have not yet done the—hush, not a word—what we do, we must do quietly. Draw the curtains—draw them close—closer still, I say—how can I kill him, with that white glittering moon looking in upon us? Now—now strike. Oh God, I dare not! That pale—pale phantom ,with the child in her hand, rises between me and him! See, she draws nearer—nearer—the little arms too are stretched out to—wife, child—I knew they would not die, and leave me all alone. Hah, that threatening form again? Off, fiend—I defied you living; I defy you dead;" and, tossing his arms wildly above his head, the stranger staggered—fell—and when Evans and his companions, recovering their self-possession, hastened forward to raise him from the floor, they found that life was extinct. In the violence of his paroxysm, he had burst a blood-vessel.

He was buried in a remote corner of Plasswynnock churchyard, and to this hour the belated villager never passes his grave, or the Manor-House where his appalling crime was committed, without a quickening of the pulse, as if both were still haunted by his ghost.

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# ADVENTURE OF A RANGER.

(*From the Illinois Monthly Magazine.*)

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WE do not know that we can fill a few pages more profitably, than by relating an adventure of our neighbour and friend Mr. Thomas Higgins, as we have heard it from his own mouth. He resides within a few miles of Vandalia, and receives a pension from the United States for his services. The statement may be relied upon, as Mr. Higgins is a man of strict veracity; his companions have corroborated his narrative, and his wounds afford ample proof of his courage and sufferings.

Tom Higgins, as he was usually called, is a native of Kentucky, and is one of the best examples extant of the genuine backwoodsman. During the last war, at the age of nineteen, he enlisted in the Rangers—a corps of mounted men, raised expressly for the protection of the western frontiers. On the 30th of August, 1814, he was one of the party of twelve men, under the command of Lieutenant Journey, who were posted at Hill's station—a small stockade, about three miles south of the present village of Greenville, and something more than twenty miles from Vandalia. Those towns were not then in existence, and the surrounding country was one vast wilderness. During the day last mentioned, "Indian signs" were seen about half a mile from the station, and at night the savages were discovered prowling near the fort—but no alarm was given. On the following morning, early, Mr. Journey moved out with his party, in pursuit of the Indians. Passing round the fence of a corn-field adjoining the fort, they struck across the prairie, and had not

proceeded more than a quarter of a mile, when, in crossing a small ridge, which was covered with a hazel thicket, in full view of the station, they fell into an ambuscade of Indians, who rose suddenly around them, to the number of seventy or eighty, and fired. Four of our party were killed, among whom was Lieutenant Journey; one other fell, badly wounded, and the rest fled, except Higgins.

It was an uncommonly sultry morning—the day was just dawning, a heavy dew had fallen the preceding night, the air was still and humid, and the smoke from the guns hung in a cloud over the spot. Under the cover of this cloud, Higgins's surviving companion had escaped, supposing all who were left were dead; or that, at all events, it would be rashness to attempt to rescue them from so overwhelming a force. Higgins's horse had been shot through the neck, fell to his knees, and rose again several times. Believing the animal mortally wounded, he dismounted, but, finding the wound had not greatly disabled him, he continued to hold the bridle; for, as he now felt confident of being able to make good his retreat, he determined to fire off his gun before he retired. He looked around for a tree—there was but one, a small elm, and he made for this, intending to shoot from behind it; but at this moment the cloud of smoke arose partially from before him, disclosing to his view a number of Indians, none of whom discovered him. One of them stood within a few paces, loading his gun, and at him Higgins took a deliberate aim, fired, and the Indian fell. Mr. Higgins, still concealed by the smoke, reloaded his gun, mounted, and turned to fly, when a low voice near him hailed him with, "Tom, you won't leave me?"

On looking round, he discovered the speaker to be one of his comrades named Burgess, who was lying wounded on the ground, and he replied instantly, "No, I'll not leave you; come along, and I'll take care of you." "I can't come," replied Burgess, "my leg is smashed all to pieces."

Higgins sprang from the saddle, and, picking up his comrade —whose ankle-bone was broken—in his arms, he proceeded to lift him on his horse, telling him to fly, and that he would make his own way on foot. But the horse, taking fright at this instant,

dashed off, leaving Higgins, with his wounded friend on foot. Still, the cool bravery of the former was sufficient for every emergency, and, setting Burgess down gently, he told him, "Now, my good fellow, you must hop off on your three legs, while I stay between you and the Indians, to keep them off"—instructing him at the same time, to get into the highest grass, and crawl as close to the ground as possible. Burgess followed his advice, and escaped unnoticed. History does not relate a more disinterested act of heroism, than this of Higgins, who, having in his hands the certain means of escape from such imminent peril, voluntarily gave them up, by offering his horse to a wounded comrade; and who, when that generous intention was defeated, and his own retreat was still practicable, remained, at the hazard of his life, to protect his crippled friend.

The cloud of smoke—which had partially opened before him, as he faced the enemy—still lay thick behind him; and, as he plunged through this, he left it, together with the ridge and the hazel thicket, between him and the main body of the Indians, and was retiring, unobserved by them. Under these circumstances, it is probable, that if he had retreated in a direct line towards the station, he might very readily have effected his escape. But Burgess was slowly crawling away in that direction, and the gallant Higgins—who coolly surveyed the whole ground—foresaw that, if he pursued the same tract, and should be discovered, his friend would be endangered. He, therefore, took the heroic resolution of deviating from the true course, so far, as that any of the enemy who should follow him would not fall in with Burgess. With this intention, he moved stealthily along, through the smoke and bushes, intending, when he emerged, to retreat at full speed. But, as he left the thicket, he beheld a large Indian near him, and two others on the other side, in the direction of the fort. Tom coolly surveyed his foes, and began to chalk out his track; for, although in the confidence of his own activity and courage, he felt undismayed at such odds, yet he found it necessary to act *the general*. Having an enemy on each flank, he determined to separate them, and fight them singly. Making for a ravine, which was not far off, he bounded away, but soon found that one of his limbs failed him, having received

a ball on the first fire, which, until now, he had scarcely noticed. The largest Indian was following him closely; Higgins turned several times to fire, but the Indian would halt and dance about, to prevent him from taking aim, and Tom knew that he could not afford to fire at random. The other two were now closing on him, and he found that, unless he could dispose of the first one, he must be overpowered. He therefore halted, resolved to receive a fire; and the Indian, at a few paces distant, raised his rifle. Higgins watched his adversary's eye, and, just as he thought his finger pressed the trigger, he suddenly threw his side to him. It is probable this motion saved his life, for the ball entered his thigh, which would have pierced his body. Tom fell, but rose again, and ran; and the largest Indian, certain of his prey, loaded again, and then, with the two others, pursued. They soon came near Higgins, who had again fallen, and, as he rose, they all three fired, and he received all their balls. He now fell and rose several times, and the Indians, throwing away their guns, advanced on him with spears and knives. They frequently charged upon him, but, on his presenting his gun at one or the other, they fell back. At last, the largest one—thinking, probably, from Tom's reserving his fire so long, that his gun was empty—charged boldly up to him, and Higgins, with a steady aim, shot him dead.

With four bullets in his body, and with an empty gun, two Indians before him, and a whole tribe but a few rods off, almost any other man would have despaired. But Tom Higgins had no such notion; the Indian whom he had last slain was the most dangerous of the three, and he felt little fear of the others. He had been near enough to see their eyes, and he knew human nature sufficiently to discover that he was their superior in courage. He therefore faced them, and began to load his rifle; they raised a whoop, and rushed on him. "They kept their distance as long as my rifle was loaded," said he, "but now, when they knew it empty, they were better soldiers."

A fierce and bloody conflict ensued. The Indians, rushing upon Tom, stabbed him in many places; but it happened, fortunately, that the shafts of their spears were thin poles, rigged hastily for the occasion, which bent whenever the point struck

a rib, or encountered the opposition of one of Higgins's tough muscles. From this cause, and the continued exertion of his hand and his rifle, in warding off their thrusts, the wounds thus made were not deep, but his whole front was covered with gashes, of which the scars yet remain in honourable proof of his valour. At last one of them threw his tomahawk; the edge sunk deep into Higgins's cheek, passed through the ear, which it severed, laid bare his skull to the back of his head, and stretched him on the plain. The Indians rushed on, but Tom instantly recovered his self-possession, and kept them off with his feet and his hands, until he succeeded in grasping one of their spears, which, as the Indian attempted to pull it from him, aided him to rise; and, clubbing his rifle, he rushed upon the nearest of his foes, and dashed his brains out; in doing which, he broke the stock to pieces, retaining only the barrel in his hand.

The other Indian, however warily he had fought before, now came manfully into battle. It is probable that he felt his character as a warrior at stake. To have fled from a man desperately wounded, and almost disarmed, or to have suffered his victim to escape, would have tarnished his manhood. Uttering a terrific yell, he rushed on, and attempted to stab the exhausted ranger; while the latter, warding off the spear with one hand, brandished his rifle-barrel in the other. The Indian, unwounded, was now by far the most powerful man, but the moral courage of our hero prevailed; and the savage, unable to bear the fierce glance of his untamed eye, began to retreat slowly towards the place where he had dropped his rifle. Tom knew that if the Indian recovered his gun, his own case was hopeless, and, throwing away his rifle-barrel, he drew his hunting-knife, and rushed in upon him. A desperate strife ensued, and several deep gashes were inflicted, but the Indian succeeded in casting Higgins from him, and ran to the spot where he had thrown down his gun, while Tom searched for the gun of the other Indian; thus the two, bleeding, and out of breath, were both searching for arms to renew the conflict.

By this time the smoke that lay between the combatants and a main body of the Indians had passed away, and a number of the latter, having passed the hazel thicket, were in full view. It

seemed, therefore, as if nothing could save our heroic ranger; but relief was at hand.

The little garrison at the station, six or seven in number, had witnessed the whole of this unparalleled combat. There was among them an heroic woman, a Mrs. Pursley, who, when she saw Higgins contending singly with the foe, urged the men to go to his rescue. The rangers at first considered the attempt hopeless, as the Indians outnumbered them ten to one. But Mrs. Pursley, declaring that so fine a fellow as Tom should not be lost for want of help, snatched a rifle out of her husband's hand, and, jumping on a horse, sallied out. The men, not to be outdone by a woman, followed at full gallop towards the place of combat. A scene of intense interest ensued: the Indians at the thicket had just discovered Tom, and were rushing down towards him with savage yells; his friends were spurring their horses to reach him first. Higgins, exhausted with the loss of blood, had fallen and fainted, while his adversary, too intent on his prey to observe any thing else, was looking for a rifle. The rangers reached the battle-ground first. Mrs. Pursley, who knew Tom's spirit, thought he had thrown himself down in despair for the loss of his gun, and tendered him the one she carried; but Tom was past shooting. His friends lifted him up, threw him across a horse before one of the party, and turned to retreat, just as the Indians came up. They made good their retreat, and the Indians retired.

We repeat this adventure just as it was related to us, and have not the least doubt that it is literally correct, or as nearly so as Mr. Higgins's opportunities for observation would admit. For, as he very properly observes, he was "in a *desperate bad fix*," just about that time, and it was a "*powerful bad chance*" for a man to take notice of what was going on around him.

After being carried into the fort, he remained insensible for some days, and his life was preserved with difficulty by his friends, who extracted all the bullets but two, which remained in the thigh; one of which gave him a great deal of pain for several years, although the flesh was healed. At length he heard that a physician had settled within a day's ride of him, whom he went to see. The physician was willing to extract the ball, but

asked the sum of fifty dollars for the operation. This Tom flatly refused to give, as it was more than half a year's pension. As he rode home, he turned the matter in his mind, and determined upon a cheaper plan; when he reached home, he requested his wife to hand him a razor, the exercise of riding had so chafed the part, that the ball, which usually was not discoverable to the touch, could be felt. With the assistance of his helpmate, he very deliberately laid open his thigh, until the edge of the razor touched the bullet, and, inserting his two thumbs into the gash, "flirted it out," as he termed it, "without costing a cent." The other ball remains in his limb yet, but gives him no trouble except when he uses violent exercise. Tom, notwithstanding his injuries, is still one of the most successful hunters in the country.

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# LES ENFANS TROUVÉS.

THE world has been growing, of late years, so wondrously philosophical and investigatory, that those idlers upon the surface of the earth, who go simply through life with their ears and eyes open, basking in the sunshine and luxuriating in the shade, are too often and too roughly required to render an account of the tears they are prone to shed, and the smiles they are apt to smile. The work-a-day world would appear to be a mere sampler for the cross-stitch sewing of pattern-ladies, experimentalists in political economy; while the world of dreams is dismissed, *sans cérémonie*, as "the baseless fabric of a vision," by the domineering utilitarians of the day. For the rationalist, as well as the schoolmaster, is abroad—the rationalist, who rules with his iron ferule, circumscribes our wanderings, chastises our emotions, and deals out our joys and sorrows as per omniscient rules of algebraic science.

> The primrose on a river's brim,
> A yellow primrose is to him,
> And it is nothing more!

A grove of horse-chestnuts, with its prodigal redundance of delicate blossoms, is a superfluous mass of unprofitable timber in his sight; nay, even the cradle-crowded wards of the objects of our present writing—the *Hospice des Enfans Trouvés*—is a mere hot-bed of corruption—the source, as well the evidence, of national delinquency!

The rationalists may be right, or, thank Heaven, *we*, at least,

are not called upon to wrestle with his arguments. Fate, which has stuck so many thorns into our side, spares us the black necessity of legislating for the crimes or frailties of the human kind. No penal code—no system of prison discipline—taxes our frivolous pen with labour and sorrow; and it may consequently subscribe to the canonisation of St. Vincent de Paul, the patron of the destitute orphans of France, without a single scruple of conscience! We leave it to Dr. Martineau and Miss Tuckerman—we beg their respective pardons, we would say, Dr. Tuckerman and Miss Martineau—to descant upon this unhappy branch of the anti-Malthusian system. Be it ours to stand beside the *crèche* of the *Hospice*, and rejoice in the smiles of the hundreds of worse than fatherless or motherless infants, warmed and fed in the bosom of charity, and succoured for the love of mercy.

The huge, rambling, but airy, hospital of the Rue d'Enfer, which has been, for nearly fifty years past, devoted by the French government to the use of deserted foundlings, was formerly a nest of lazy monks, known by the name of *Les Pères de l'Oratoire*—the *Enfans Trouvés* being, at that time, housed in a miserable dwelling hired of the chapter of Notre Dame, adjoining the cathedral, where a cradle, containing one of the little foundlings, was constantly exposed, to excite the commiseration of the benevolent. A widow lady, residing in the neighbourhood, touched by their neglected condition, chose to receive them into her own habitation; and it was there that the virtuous St. Vincent discovered the little innocents to have been made an article of infamous traffic by the servants of their pseudo benefactress, grown weary of their gratuitous attendance. In 1683, therefore, he petitioned Government for a safer domicile, and engaged the Sisters of Charity to bestow their care upon the unhappy babes. Funds were still wanting for the support of the establishment; and so many were the applicants, that it came at length *to be decided by lot*, which should be received into the new hospital, and *which cast forth to perish!* Again did St. Vincent de Paul preach to the city in their behalf, and petition the Court; and the repulses encountered by the philanthropist in his attempts served only to stimulate his zeal. He obtained for the hospital a small annuity, gradually increased with the increasing

number of foundlings; and, from the original allowance of 200*l.* sterling per annum, the grant was eventually augmented to 1,000*l.*, while various asylums were successively awarded to their use. Soon after the Revolution, and the abolition of religious orders, the celebrated abbey of Port Royal des Champs was at last converted into a lying-in hospital, and the adjoining convent of L'Oratoire bestowed upon the *Enfans Trouvés;* and it is there that nearly ten of the fifty thousand foundlings annually protected by public charity throughout the kingdom of France are at present secured from misery and destitution. Received at all hours of the day and night, and superintended by the pious sisterhood of St. Vincent de Paul, with scarcely less than motherly tenderness, the infants are reared by wet-nurses from the provinces, who, after a week's residence in the *hospice*, withdraw, with several babes under their charge, to the country, where they are visited at intervals by the *préposés*, or agents of the establishment. Ailing and weakly children, however, are retained in the infirmary of the hospital, for the benefit of medical advice; and at twelve years of age, each child is apprenticed to a trade, or consigned to the Orphan Asylum.

Such is the order of the establishment! Its *aspect* how touchingly mournful! You enter the grating of the *parloir*, and find one or two Sisters of Charity engaged with needle-work, or a pious book, constantly on the watch for the turning of the machine containing the cushion on which the deserted children are deposited; and rarely does an hour elapse, but the feeble wail of an infant is heard in that tranquil chamber. The announcing-bell rings, the nuns lay aside their work, open a little oven-like door in the wall, and, proud to examine the new-comer, inscribe it in the register of the *hospice*, with dates of day and hour, and a particular description; sometimes even with the name affixed to its dress, whether that dress may be the purple and fine linen, betraying some child of shame despatched from some noble mansion, under a midwife's charge, or the coarse or ragged vestments still moist with the tears of a half-starved mother, forced to alienate her last-born from her bosom that she may have leisure and strength to labour for the rest. Not unfrequently, a young father and mother are seen to enter the *parloir*, and openly

resign their helpless offspring to the care of the nuns, with the avowal of their name and misfortunes, and the expression of a hope that they may claim back, in happier times, the child they are forced to abandon;—not unfrequently, some unhappy mother who has consigned her infant to the turning-cradle, and watched its admission into the *hospice*, forces her way after it into the *parloir*, to take another look—another kiss—and breathe upon the forehead of the innocent one last, one final prayer, that the world may deal less hardly with it than with the authors of its being. Others, more hardened, or perhaps more miserable, fling from them, with a curse, the helpless burden on which their vices have entailed the stigma of shame, turning away from the receiving-box without a pang—without a shudder; and these, but for the benign intervention of St. Vincent de Paul, these wretches would probably have become guilty of infanticide!

In a corridor, opening from the chief entrance of the hospital, stands a marble statue of that most Christian of all modern saints, its patron and benefactor, holding in his arms a rescued infant, while another lies ready to perish at his feet—a picture worthily preparing the mind for the inspection of the dormitories above, with their rows of cradles, each with a sleeping babe cozily nestled in warmth and comfort between the snow-white sheets. Laundries, kitchens, wardrobes, infirmaries—all are airily distributed and actively attended by the vigilant and tender-hearted nuns; and it is curious to note the womanliness of nature breaking forth in each kind Sister, as she points out to the visiter some especial darling—some little one with bluer eyes or deeper dimples than the rest—some favourite, who has been won by her endearments to smile upon her from between its white curtains as she passes, or even to put forth its tiny hand in token of recognition. So should it have smiled upon her who bore it—so should it have caressed the mother whose blood flows in its veins; but *she* is away—*she* is labouring or grieving afar off, happy that her infant has found a second mother on whom it can lavish its first outpourings of tenderness. In general, too, the hospital boasts one universal pet—some little toddling thing which has been preserved through desperate sickness, or undergone some

severe accident, till the *révérende mère*, or *sœur supérieure* obtains from the directors a permission, often renewed, to retain it at the *hospice* for a time, instead of sending it back to country nursing. What a fate!—to be the foundling of some twenty mothers! Every kiss disputed—every word watched as a miracle by those whose attention were otherwise devoted to the unmeaning cries of the newly-born, or the murmurs of the sick and fretful!

There was one such idol there, when last we visited the wards of the *Hospice des Enfans Trouvés*—a lovely, little, fair-haired prattler of two years old, crawling at the feet of a group of the Sisters, as they sat engaged in the wardrobe, mending and making baby-clothes for the establishment; and a singular contrast did her sportiveness afford to the subdued demeanour of the nuns in their gowns of black serge, and starched and snowy hoods. Each, peeping from her work, had a smile to bestow on the gambols of little Rosalie; for Rosalie had been rescued, in a half-dying state, from the hands of a cruel nurse, whose malefactions were brought to light by the *préposés* in the course of their domiciliary visits; and, when recovering from the fever of inanition, which had been expected to end in a deep decline, was found so much endeared to her kind protectresses, that she could not easily be parted with. Rosalie was voted, in short, too delicate to be entrusted to ordinary nursing; and pretexts were again and again found for delay, sanctioned, with a smile, by the benevolent registrar and his assistants.

"Elle est si gentille—si gentille!" pleaded the Sister who accompanied us in our survey; "et puis, cette pauvre petite, elle a tant souffert; et puis, elle nous aime tant! Ce serait son arrêt de mort de l'éloigner de l'hospice; et pour nous autres, je ne sais plus ce que nous deviendrons sans notre petite Rosalie!" And it must be admitted that the infantine beauty of the child was of rare perfection—

Making a sunshine in that shady place.

"But yonder little fellow,"—said one of our party, pointing out to our sober-suited companion a sturdy boy of about five years old, seated demurely on a little stool, to watch, with apparent awe, the industry of the Sisters and the sports of his fair fellow-foundling—"does not appear to have suffered from ill-

health or ill-treatment; yet he has considerably passed the age for remaining here. Is *he*, too, a favourite?"

"The boy arrived only last night from the country," observed the nun; "and the peasant-woman you noticed in the courtyard, as so sad-looking and dispirited, is his nurse. Every hour we expect his parents here to take him away; for Alphonse has been claimed, and the poor soul who nursed him is ready to break her heart at the notion of parting."

"The child has been claimed?—He is, then, the offspring of wealthy parents, for whom the motive which induced the concealment of his birth no longer exists?"

"By no means!" resumed the Sister. "It has been noted among us, that the children of the great—those whom we distinguish, on their arrival, by the fineness of their cambric, by some shred of rich lace, or even a costly trinket placed among the clothes, as if for the very purpose of insuring future recognition—are never sought again! It may, perhaps, be the intention of the young and criminal mother, in whose heart the first cry of her child has just awakened the mighty consciousness of maternity, to seek it at some more auspicious moment; but with such people, the world and its conventions are all in all. Every day, every hour, serves to weaken early impressions and the impulses of nature; and the sacrifice, at first deferred to a more convenient season, is at length wholly laid aside as romantic and unachievable. 'The child is now too old, and must have grown familiarised with low society and degrading habits. Its sphere, degraded by circumstances, has become second nature; it would be cruel to alter its condition!' argue the noble or the opulent who have been tempted to abandon their babes to our fonder care."

"And Alphonse is happier, then, than to have been nobly born?"

"Far happier; for his parents are willing to profit by the first glimpse of sunshine visiting their destiny, to reknit the broken ties of outraged nature. I myself was the Sister who happened to receive that boy in the *parloir*, on his first admittance. I remember it well—a raw night in November; and, even close beside the stove allowed us to sit up by during the winter, the cold-

ness of the night air was hard to bear. And, when the ringing of the bell announced to me that a babe was deposited, and I rose to receive the poor little bantling into my arms, so distinctly did I hear the sobs and wailing of the woman who had brought it to the *hospice*, and who stood loitering and bemoaning herself beneath the window, that somehow or other I could not but ask leave from the porter to open the gate (though contrary to all our rules and regulations), and admit her into the *parloir*. Poor soul! chilly and bleak as was the weather, she had but the thinnest and scantiest rags to cover her;—it was plain that she had bestowed the best of her wardrobe upon the child! And down she went on her knees to thank me for allowing her to look upon its little face again, begging only permission to pass the remainder of the night with me in my watch—the last night it would be given her to bestow her tending upon her babe!"

"Poor creature!—Poor and miserable mother!"

"Poor and miserable, indeed!—I protest to you that it chilled the very heart within me to see her skinny hands outspread to caress the little rosy urchin which God and nature had nourished; and when, with the tears rolling down her wasted cheeks, she asked leave (on seeing me prepare food for the infant) to try and bestow on it once more the blessing of its mother's milk, I fed the half-starved woman with the simple nutriment prepared for our foundlings, and almost trembled when I saw her devour it like one who had well nigh forgotten the taste of food!—'But for this,' said she, 'but that I have no longer nourishment to give my child, God be my witness, I would never have abandoned it. I could not see it die!' You may believe, Sir, that I strove to reconcile her to the resolution she had taken, and to reassure her as to the treatment awaiting her babe!"

"And yet, I doubt whether you can have found words to reply to all the questions she must have asked, or satisfy the misgivings that disturbed a mother's mind?"

"You may well say so! Long as was that dreary winter's night, it scarcely sufficed for me to listen to all her charges—all her entreaties. And when morning began to dawn and it became necessary to prepare for removing the little creature into a vacant cradle in the dormitory, the kisses bestowed by that un-

happy woman on the cheeks, forehead, hands, feet, of her own and only, would have melted a heart of iron. She seemed as if admiring its beauties for the first time; conned over its little limbs as if impressing its image indelibly in her mind; pressed it to her wasted breast, clung to it, clasped it, till I was fain to force her to quit the *hospice*, before the superiors were astir, from whom I might have experienced a severe rebuke for the unauthorised indulgence I had granted her."

"They could not have found the heart to rebuke such an exercise of Christian mercy! How could you have acted otherwise?"

"The regulations of our house are peremptory," replied the nun. "Every infringement is an error. For that time, however, I escaped without chastisement; and merely submitted myself to the voluntary penance of rising two hours earlier than usual, for thirty following mornings, as an expiation of my faults."

"*Faults!*" we irresistibly exclaimed.

But at that moment a young *sœur converse* entering the wardrobe, with a light step and joyous countenance, whispered something to our conductress, and, taking little Alphonse by the hand, was about to lead him away.

"Stay a little, *Sœur Agnès*," interposed my pious companion; and the eager parting embraces which Rosalie rushed forward to bestow on her companion, favoured the project of delay. "Have the young couple affixed their signature to the registers in the Chancery?—have all the necessary forms been completed?"

"All; they are waiting impatiently for a sight of the boy."

"In a minute! I could wish that poor Manon, his nurse, were present at the meeting, in order to reconcile her to the loss of her nursling. She would see at once that, dearly as she has loved him, no love is like a mother's love. I, too, plead my right to witness their first interview. So return, *ma chère sœur*, and persuade them to await the child a minute in the garden; and from the windows of the refectory, this gentleman, as well as myself, may experience the gratification of beholding their joy without imposing a restraint on their presence."

It was not, however, joy unmixed we were called upon to wit-

ness. Alphonse, in his progress towards the shady avenue of embowering chestnut-trees adjoining the *hospice* where his parents were invited by *Sœur Agnès* to wait his coming, had unluckily stumbled on his Norman nurse, from whom he had been that morning parted for the first time. To talk to him of father or mother, at such a moment, was like prating of kings or queens! To *him*, the name of parents was an empty sound—for he had been an abandoned child—*a foundling*. Manon—his good Manon—his dear Manon—his *Maman* Manon—was all in all to Alphonse; and, attaching himself to her apron, he stoutly refused to be separated from her, or to follow the guidance of Sister Agnès. There was but one remedy; Manon herself must become his conductress, and force him towards his parents! But this interesting altercation had unluckily passed sufficiently near them for the whole truth to become painfully apparent. The tender heart of the agitated mother was convulsed to anguish. Her disappointment was too great for her to bear; and, ere her husband could step forward to her support, she rolled on the sand at his feet, with the blood gushing from her lips and nostrils!

It now became our sad task to assist in bearing the unhappy woman into the *hospice;* nor was it till after the lapse of an hour, and the most active and skilful aid on the part of the terrified sisterhood, that her senses were completely restored. To *us* the whole scene was singularly striking. It was the first time we had chanced to see the lancets wielded by a female hand; and the grave but benign demeanour of the Sisters of Charity formed a curious contrast with the voluble distress of the poor bright-faced, rude-handed, loud-voiced Norman peasant—the innocent authoress of the mischief. At our suggestion, however, the good woman withdrew from the chamber before the opening eyes of the distressed mother began to search around for her son; and Alphonse, whose little heart had been moved by the reproach of the nuns that he had inflicted pain upon his mother, no less than by the sight of her sufferings, crept towards her, and locked his hand in hers, as it hung half-lifeless from the bed on which she had been deposited.

Fortunately our carriage was in waiting at the gates of the

*hospice*, and afforded a pretext of aiding in the transportation of the enfeebled woman to her own home, by which we were enabled to obtain a further insight into her strange eventful history. The road from the Rue d'Enfer to the environs of the Fauboürg du Temple proved sufficiently long to give leisure for assurances of sympathy and interest, which eventually served to secure, in return, the confidence of the young couple. We were invited to a repetition of our accidental visit; admitted to offer advice touching the most advisable mode of winning the affections of the little foundling, without inducing a sentiment of ingratitude towards the good Manon; and became, in short, part and parcel of the family council;—a post of honour enabling us to offer, confidentially, to our readers, the following particulars of "an ower true tale" of human suffering.

Florentine Raulain was the only daughter of a wealthy farmer of Lower Brittany, and shared with one brother, a few years older than herself, the doating affection of her parents. The hereditary farm of old Raulain, situated in one of the pastoral districts of the province, was of no very considerable extent. But, although it was his pleasure and pride to reside in the old rambling dwelling-house of Franchetour, with its ill-built offices and inconvenient distribution, his chief revenues were derived from the cultivation of extensive lands, belonging to the noble house of La Tour-Clairval, whose magnificent château stood within a league of the farm. It constituted, indeed, a curious characteristic in the old farmer, that the self-importance with which he announced himself to belong to one of the most ancient and independent families in the province, was scarcely secondary to that with which he manifested his subjection to the suzerainty of the Comte de Clairval; he was as proud of declaring himself the chief tenant of the great loyalist lord of that part of the country, as of being the proprietor of Franchetour. It was true he had many motives for triumph in his servitude and its results. At the period of the first Revolution, Victor Raulain, then a stout young man of five-and-twenty, and possessed of considerable influence in the neighbourhood, had done much to preserve the Château de Clairval from pillage and destruction; and, after the execution of the old Count, and the emigration of his family,

had even become a sort of *fidei-commis*, the ostensible purchaser of the Clairval estates, when they were confiscated and sold as national property; and the manner in which this delicate trust had been executed, and eventually given up on the erasure of the family name from the list of proscription, created the strongest bonds of mutual confidence between master and tenant. For it was well known that the farmer of Franchetour had not been debarred by want of means from becoming the *bonâ-fide* lord of the castle and its dependencies; and that he would have regarded it as little less than sacrilege to have trenched a single acre upon the proprietorship of ground so hallowed. The sentiment of loyalty and vassalship, supposed to be peculiar to his native province, was, in fact, remarkably developed in Raulain, although affording little distinction in the neighbourhood of Franchetour, where the Almighty in the Heavens—a Bourbon on the throne—and a Clairval at the Château La Tour—formed, in the estimation of that simple peasantry, only progressive demonstrations of the same all-ruling Power. There Vendée-ism partook of a more than fanatic spirit. It will easily be understood that the population of such a district entertained at best but a hollow allegiance to the Imperial sway. Raulain and his wife, indeed, submitted themselves with comparative cheerfulness to the rule of one who had been the means of restoring to them the beloved Clairval family, driven forth to exile by the misrule of the Republic; but they rejoiced to see the lords of that noble line hold themselves aloof from the court of the Tuileries, not only because it secured their residence in their native province, but as affording encouragement to the staunchness of their own Bourbonism. Nevertheless, the natural vanity of the Frenchman prevailed at times even over the loyalty of the Breton; and there were moments when the columns of the "Moniteur" caused the old man's eyes to glisten with delight, while noting the lawless progress of the armies of his country over the trampled fields of foreign lands. A different view of the case presented itself, indeed, from the moment that Victor, his only son, attained the age to be included in the Imperial conscription. *Not* that Raulain of Franchetour lacked the means of redemption, or the inclination to apply them to the purchase of a substitute; but avail-

able *remplaçants* were becoming every day more scarce, and young Victor unluckily displayed every disposition to profit by the first opportunity that might present itself to exchange the ploughshare for the lance; for Victor was, in fact, *un enfant de la Révolution*—born at the moment of the great conflict between ancient abuses and moral enlightenment, so as to enjoy the benefit of its results, without having witnessed the fearful crimes accompanying the struggle; and, opening his eyes for the first time to the progress of public events, at a time when the names of Marengo and Austerlitz shed a meteoric light over the history of his native country, dazzling the young, and misleading the unwary. Over the mind of the young aspirant, accordingly, the supremacy of the Château de Clairval, and the influence of the family, obtained but limited consideration; and it was a blind reliance on the part of the old farmer which induced him to hope that, in the event of an unlucky number falling to the share of his boy, the remonstrances of the Comte de Clairval would suffice to induce Victor's acceptance of a *remplaçant* at a cost severely injurious to the interests of his family.

Victor, on the contrary, had long been weary of the monotonous obscurity of his destinies, and impatient of the abject subjection of his parents to the magnet of the district; for the Comte de Clairval, one of the emptiest and vainest of mankind, blindly unconscious of the progress of intellectual enlightenment operating around him, continued to exact from his tenants the same Helot-like homage as from his domestic servants, and from his domestic servants the sycophantic servility of slaves. Even over the Raulains, who, although occupants of a portion of his lands, were wholly independent, he affected to exercise the authority of the *ancien Seigneur de village;* and Victor's heart swelled indignantly within him when at length he beheld the unmeaning arrogance of the Count aped by his sons and daughters—when he found himself treated as a clod of the valley by Count Amédée, a youth of his own age—or saw his pretty sister, Florentine, exposed to the cold derision of the daughters of the house of La Tour-Clairval.

The results of this irritation of spirit were more natural than commendable. Victor, who for once had submitted to the de-

cree of his father, and having been drawn a conscript, accepted a substitute, would not hear of a second pecuniary sacrifice when, three years afterwards, a black number fell once more to his lot. "There is a fate in this!" was his involuntary exclamation when the result of the *tirage* was declared. "My fortunes evidently lie in the field of battle—the vicissitudes of a soldier's career will better suit this impetuous spirit of mine than the monotonous dronery of rural life; and many are the things which convince me that, should I remain at Franchetour, serious altercations might arise betwixt myself and my father;—this time, therefore, be the chance upon my head!" And, without perilling the resolution he had taken, by an interview with his family, or so much as obeying the commands of the Count de la Tour-Clairval, that he would instantly repair to the château to be lectured, hectored, and reprimanded, away went Victor Raulain—staff in hand, and a cockade in his cap—to attend the general muster at the *chef-lieu* of the department; and, lo! within three months of the day productive of so many tears at Franchetour, and such an outbreak of indignation at the château, Victor received his first wound on the banks of the "dark-rolling Danube!".

Meanwhile, of those whom he had left behind, Florentine was the most to be pitied. His father and mother were greatly incensed by his departure, more especially on account of the insubordination that had been evinced by the young conscript against the authority of the descendant of the patron of his forefathers; but his sister was *afflicted* by his absence. He was, in fact, her friend—her sole solace and companion. Victor not only possessed an intelligent and aspiring frame of mind, but had been permitted by his father to acquire some smattering of scholarship at the *Lycée* of Rennes (in order to conduct the business of the farm on a more regular system than old Raulain's ignorance had hitherto introduced), where he had contrived to turn his time sufficiently to account, to overstep the vulgar limits of knowledge tacitly assigned him by his parents. He was even enabled, on his return to Franchetour, to extend to his young sister some portion of his recent acquirements, and Florentine, hitherto restricted to the domestic avocations which had formed the business of her mother's life of drudgery—the dairy-work,

and spinning and bleaching of the farm—had the happiness of owing her first rudiments of education to the brother whom she loved. Nor were the old people jealous of the time she bestowed on her books, and which she took care they should have no reason to miss from the execution of her customary tasks. But now the indulgent preceptor, the kind companion, was gone; and Florentine was left alone to her apprehensions for his safety—to the murmurs of her parents against his unfilial wilfulness, as well as to the contumely of the family of Clairval; for it soon appeared that the Countess and her two daughters were as much disposed to resent the presumption of their farmer's daughter in learning to read and write, as the baseness of Victor Raulain in devoting his services to the government of Napoleon Bonaparte.

It afforded, at least, some comfort to the dispirited girl, that her brother did not devote them without effect. In the course of his first campaign, young Raulain had an opportunity of distinguishing himself under the eye of the Emperor; in the second, he had the happy fortune of obtaining *la croix des braves;* and Florentine felt herself armed against the cold looks and haughty interrogations of the ladies of the château, when they visited the farm to bargain for fresh honeycomb, and demand what news of the conscript. Other vexations, however, were in store for her. A son of the house-steward of the Comte de Clairval, smitten, perhaps, no less with her excellent qualifications as a thrifty housewife than with her pretty face and promised dower, thought proper to demand her hand in marriage; and as the Clairval family deigned to support his suit, the old farmer gave a conditional assent to the proposals of Prosper Anguié. But Florentine happened to entertain strong prejudices against this pretender to her hand. Previous to Victor's departure, her brother had repeatedly pointed him out to her abhorrence, as dissolute, violent, and vindictive; and there was a betrayal of ferocity in the glances of his eye, which overpowered her timid nature with vague apprehensions. It was unnecessary to disguise from parents so kind, either her aversion or its motives; but old Raulain, unwilling to offend his patrons at the château by an absolute rejection of their protégé, contented himself with pleading Florentine's youth and general objections to matrimony; granting permission,

meanwhile, to Prosper to attempt the courtship, on condition that if, within a twelvemonth, he did not succeed in overcoming her repugnance, he would quietly abjure his pretensions.

Prosper Anguié, his father, and friends, smiled while they listened to these terms; for the young man was, without question, the gayest, best-looking, best-dressed, and best-mannered suitor likely to fall to the share of the fastidious damsel of Franchetour; and none of them doubted, and least of all the hero of the romance, but that, within the given period, Florentine Raulain would surrender herself at discretion to be the bride of her self-sufficient admirer.

Circumstances, indeed, appeared to favour their view of the case. Prosper, aware how much his chance of securing the hand of the co-heiress of the wealthy Breton farmer depended on the steadiness of his conduct and mildness of his demeanour during his year of probation, assumed a virtue where he had it not; laid aside, or seemed to lay aside, his habits of dissipation and impetuosities of temper, and, instead of being heard of at *fêtes* and fairs as a brawler in wine-houses, or dicer in booths, was found seated, evening after evening, during the winter, within the vast chimney-corner of Franchetour; or, during the summer, amused himself with pruning the luxuriant shoots of the vines overhanging the trellice of a garden-seat, known by the name of Florentine's bower. All this was flattering enough; and the fair object of his worship began to fear that she should no longer find reasonable objections to a suitor who, she knew not why, still remained personally distasteful to her. But when Prosper, finding his sighs and glances, his courtesies and attentions, insufficient to achieve the conquest to which he had devoted himself, he wisely hit upon a last resource, which succeeded beyond his utmost expectations. He made it the business of his life to procure the earliest and most ample information concerning the movements of the grand army, more especially concerning the detachment in which Victor Raulain was serving, and scarcely a week passed but he contrived to bring tidings to the farm, gratifying to the pride, or soothing to the terrors of Florentine and her family.

Nevertheless, his evil genius still prevailed. He could not

bring himself to record *all* the good he heard of the character and conduct of a man whose enmity towards himself he suspected, and with reason, to be the origin of the protraction of his suit; and very seldom could he be induced to win the heartfelt thanks and glowing smile of Florentine for his tidings of the prowess of her beloved brother, without attempting to dim the lustre of Victor's feats by anecdotes of the superior heroism of one of his brother soldiers, a certain Alphonse Déricourt—the very Bayard of worsted-lace—on whom the Emperor had bestowed, on the field of battle, a decoration taken from his own breast. But though Florentine listened grudgingly to these recitals of the valour of a stranger placed in envious comparison with that of her beloved brother, she was grateful for circumstantial details which she could not otherwise obtain. She loved to hear of the marchings and countermarchings of the division in which Victor was included—of the renown of the generals under whom he served—of the position assigned them in the ranks of the *grande armée*—till at length she began to forgive the said Alphonse Déricourt the fame which seemed to be in some measure shared by her brother; and to feel gratefully and almost affectionately inclined towards the bringer of glad tidings.

She taught herself to smile upon Prosper in return for his intelligence, and began to rejoice whenever she caught a glimpse of his person entering the arched gateway of the farm.

This gradual change of feeling towards him did not, however, operate advantageously on the conduct of one whose character was still unaltered. Already weary of the self-denial he had imposed on himself, young Anguié returned to his original habits of libertinism; at first secretly and with measure, but not without the usual evil consequences attendant on such relapses. His idle companions, pleased to win him back after a pitiful or simulated reformation, exerted themselves to the utmost to render his former ways, ways of added pleasantness, involved him in a thousand follies, and soon inspired him with new vices and wilder wickedness. Still, through all his indiscretions, Prosper was cautious to keep up appearances at the farm: however his nights might pass, he was careful that a portion of every day should be devoted, as usual, to Florentine and Franchetour; and

that his misdemeanour should be perpetrated only in presence of those who entertained no connection with the Raulain family. He knew it to be the interest of many of his associates, to whom he owed considerable sums of money, to guard from the suspicions of his future father-in-law the fact that he was a gambler, a drunkard, and a brawler, and doubted not that his personal influence was now sufficiently established to secure his prosperous marriage; part of Florentine's dowry being already devoted to the payment of his debts, and speculations being entertained among the ruffians, his companions, concerning the remaining moiety of old Raulain's property, which the chances of war were so likely to throw into the hands of her husband. For the disasters of the imperial army were now, in spite of the deceptious bulletins of government, becoming generally discussed; and the calamities of the Russian campaign had for some time past driven sleep from the pillow of Florentine Raulain, and peace from the hearthside of Franchetour. At length, from bad to worse, the *very* worst brought consolation: the imperial eagle fell to the earth—lost, though not dishonoured. And the last tidings of the army, brought by Prosper to the farm, announced Napoleon to be a captive, the allies to be triumphant in the capital, and the family of Clairval off to the Pas de Calais, to welcome back the Bourbons to the throne of France. It was a mingled yarn, but good seemed to preponderate; for Victor might now be expected home again, and a letter in his own handwriting soon certified the fact that his furlongh was obtained, and that he might shortly be expected in Bretagne. From that moment, half poor Florentine's days were passed on a green hillside overlooking the high road, from whence she hoped to be the first to note the arrival of her brother.

And the first she was! Hers was the first ear that caught the well-known tones of his manly voice, measuring his footsteps on the causeway by the *refrain* of a military air; while, with his knapsack on his shoulder, and his *bonnet de police* stuck gallantly on his head, he took his way towards Franchetour from the *Croix de Ste. Marthe*, where he had been deposited by the diligence de Rennes. But she was amazed to perceive that Victor was not alone; although superior in fortune and condition to

the majority of his comrades, she knew he was the last man on earth to affect the enervate appendage of a serving-man; nor was the figure by which he was accompanied by any means characteristic of a degree inferior to his own. But she gave herself no time to ponder on the case; with the swiftness of a roe, Florentine fled down the hill-side, and, amid mutual exclamations of "My sister!" "My dear brother!" was locked in the arms of Victor. At last came the moment of explanation, and "My friend Alphonse Déricourt, who has come to pass a month with us at the old farm," served as sufficient interpretation of the mystery.

Who now so happy as the family at Franchetour? Even the old farmer was willing to pardon the former petulance of his boy, while he listened to the recitals of the two young soldiers, and began to fancy that the eagle might have formed as exciting a national emblem as the *fleur de lis* and the *drapeau blanc*: more particularly when young Victor half assented to his proposition that, should the peace prove permanent, his discharge should be purchased by a substitute, that he might return to settle at once in the bosom of his family. For Victor Raulain, amid the perils and hazards, the crosses and vexations of a soldier's life, had almost forgotten the minor annoyance derivable from the influence of the Clairval family; and had so long been comparatively independent, as scarcely to apprehend that his thriving and happy family could still remain subjected to little less than feudal tyranny.

It was not till the return of evening brought the arrival of Prosper Anguié; and a single glance of the eyes, now habituated to scan and scrutinise the ways of man and woman, assured Victor that the son of the Clairval *maître d'hôtel* came, not only as a lover, but as a lover was received, and a cloud gathered upon the brow of the young soldier. He had cherished other hopes—other views for his sister; had more than once whispered to Alphonse in the hour of cheer succeeding the hour of danger, "*Thou*, and thou only, shalt be the husband of Florentine;" nor could he now refrain from seizing the earliest opportunity to take her apart and question her how it had chanced that, after all his warnings, she should have ventured to pledge her affec-

tions to a libertine such as Anguié? Prosper, too, could not have been seen in a less favourable light than on the evening in question. To behold a stranger—a young and handsome stranger—installed under Raulain's roof, was naturally irritating to his feelings; but the discovery that the interloper was none other than the Alphonse Déricourt, so often the subject of his enthusiastic encomiums, filled him with distrust and consternation. Already he discerned a rival, and a rival favoured by Victor, in the fine, frank, open-hearted hussar; and turned aside, gloomy and unrejoicing, when he saw all beside gladsome and gay at Franchetour.

There is nothing so difficult, so impossible, as for the ungenerous and artful to enter into the impulses of an honourable and ingenuous nature. Had Prosper, on discovering the unabated dislike of his future brother-in-law, addressed him with spirit and candour, saying, "Such and such I was when you quitted the country; but time has wrought a change in my character, and, should I be so happy as to become the husband of Florentine, all shall be well in our household, and orderly in our career. Give me your hand, Victor, and think better of your future brother"—the prejudices of young Raulain would have given way before the frankness of the appeal; but Prosper was deeply conscious that time had wrought no revolution in his character, and, dreading the clear-sighted investigations of a brother's love, chose to envelop his intentions in sullen silence, where he could not hope to win by conciliation.

The morrow came, and even the devoted vassal was disgusted by the airs of disdain with which the household of the Comte de la Tour-Clairval saw fit to mark their consciousness of the return of his son. He felt that Victor was covered with the scars of honourable wounds received in the defence of his country; and, for a moment, rose so far superior to his prejudices, as to assert that it mattered little under what ensign of victory the distinction had been achieved. He even turned a deaf or scornful ear to the inquiry of the elder Anguié—the grey-headed steward—whether it was his intention to convert Franchetour into a barrack for the invalided minions of the Corsican; and, on the query being reiterated, sternly replied that "Alphonse Déricourt was neither

an invalid nor a minion, but a gallant soldier, the chosen friend of his only son."

"And it may be the future husband of your only daughter," sneered the intendant.

"*That's* as she herself decides!" replied the old man, unblenchingly. But although he did not choose the arrogant Anguié to discern the discomfiture which such an insinuation had produced in his mind, it must be owned that, on that day, he regarded, with less than his usual complaisance, the handsome friend of Victor seated beside his domestic board. He said not a word, however, indicative of so inhospitable a sentiment; and, if moved to reply with petulance to certain comments hazarded by Alphonse on the sharklike eagerness of the Clairval family in following the vessel of the state, now that a share of its pelf and provisions was likely to be appropriated to their rapacity, he did not avoid, even to himself, the motive of his ill-humour. He might have been as discourteous as he chose, and Alphonse would have heeded it not, for he felt that already Florentine smiled upon him; already saw in him all she had dreamed of as most attractive in a lover—most endearing in a husband. He was Victor himself, Victor, less rough, less irritable; he was Victor's friend too, her father's guest, and soon her own infatuated adorer. To avow his attachment, even to her brother, however, was out of the question; for old Raullain made no secret of his engagements with Prosper Anguié; and, as Florentine had at present uttered no declaration of her intentions to profit by her father's sanction, and discard, at the close of the twelve months of probation, the suitor who, in the course of the first six months, had undoubtedly made some advances in her favour, delicacy sealed the lips of all parties concerned. The farmer, meanwhile, did not interfere to prevent his daughter accompanying the two friends when they proceeded on their fishing expeditions by the side of those bright brooks intersecting the shady pastures of the neighbourhood of Franchetour; and Florentine and Alphonse often sat together under the hazel-bushes, listening to the thrush and blackbird, or watching the silent progress of the blossomy summer hours, while Victor reckoned, with triumphant pride, the weight of his basket of trout or grayling, apparently satisfied

that his friend was reciting the hair-breadth 'scapes of their mutual campaigns, and his sister (like the gentle lady wedded to the Moor) seriously inclining her ear to listen. And when, on their return homewards, between the green thickets of the *bocage*, the lovers lingered together, behind, and out of Victor's sight, he did not trouble himself to turn and seek them, but patiently awaited their coming up to join him; concluding that they were amusing themselves gathering from the thorn bushes the tufts of wool left there by his father's flock on their road to the pastures, or pulling down branches of pale wild honeysuckle, to adorn the brows of the lovely Florentine.

Need it be recorded that, while, in the course of similar expeditions, the friendship of the three daily strengthened and increased, the hatred of the all-but-defeated Prosper Anguié grew darker and more vindictive. At first he attempted to mingle in their sports and pleasures, but soon found himself utterly repulsed by the indifference of their demeanour; and the fourth of a *partie quarrée*, of which three members alone are congenial to each other, has assuredly a part to play far beyond the patience of a man unaccustomed to control his irregularities of temper. At the farm, and under the sanction of the elder Raulain, he enjoyed greater advantages; and, still treated by the father and mother as the affianced lover of their daughter, sometimes ventured on words and looks addressed to Florentine, which provoked against himself words and looks of a far less gentle nature on the part of Alphonse Déricourt.

It was in the course of one of these evening reunions, when one or two neighbours had been united at Franchetour in commemoration of the Vigil of St. Roch, a popular patron of that part of the country, whose fête was to be duly celebrated in the little town of Beauchâtel, at two leagues' distance from the farm, on the following day, that old Raulain happened to let fall a word or two expressive of his reliance of the completion of his daughter's engagements with Anguié's son at the close of the year; Prosper himself was not present at the moment of this startling declaration, which was doubtless intended as a word of warning to the presumptuous young soldier, who, in spite of his frank avowals of poverty, was evidently beginning to cherish

hopes of obtaining the hand and affections of Florentine. Not a word, however, did Alphonse hazard expressive of surprise or disappointment; but, though waiting a calmer hour to appeal to the friendship of Victor, and the tender mercies of his father, his vexation found vent in a different channel. Above the baseness of breathing an insinuation against the absent Prosper, he took upon himself a soldier's privilege of pledging a health to the Captain of Elba, of deriding Bourbons and Bourbonists; and, above all, of including in his sneers the house of La Tour-Clairval, and its magnifico of a steward. Heated by the convivialities of the evening, no less than by the unexpected hint of old Raulain, he was not to be silenced by the remonstrances of Victor, the entreaties of Florentine, or the angry gestures of the guests. Even when the farmer harshly commanded him to silence, and bade him remember in whose presence he was standing, it was not till still more angry words had passed between himself and Victor (who felt compelled to stand forth the champion of his father), that the intemperate lover could be induced to hold his peace.

The scene was a painful one to all parties. But, on the following morning, the two friends were to set forth together to the town of Beauchâtel, to assist in the celebration of the fête; and, before their departure, Victor voluntarily pledged himself to his father and mother, and, above all, to Florentine, that he would profit by their excursion to hold a conversation with Déricourt likely to preclude all possibility of a recurrence of his offence. The bright sun of an early autumnal morning shone upon the two friends as they issued forth together from the farm; and Florentine and her mother stood at the gate, nodding and greeting till they were out of sight.

Towards evening, both stood there again, looking out smilingly and confidently for their return; for the mother and daughter having declined taking part in the day's amusements, the two young men had mutually agreed to rest contented with the enjoyment of the morning's diversions, a *joûte sur l'eau* on the Loire, foot-races, *mâts de cocagne*, and similar pastimes, without absenting themselves from Franchetour for the sake of the evening dance. But it seemed that their resolutions had been ill-for-

tified; for twilight came, and yet they lingered; and night closed in, and still they were away. Florentine grew uneasy, but said nothing; while old Raulain, without experiencing a moment's uneasiness, found much to say; blaming his son for his love of idle dissipation, and blaming Alphonse as the misleader of his son. It was in vain that Florentine kept protesting the next, the *very* next, would bring them back. The usual hour of rest arrived, but no revellers from the fair of Beauchâtel; and Raulain, as he passed into his bed-room for the night, turned towards his daughter, to observe, with significant petulance—"So much as you have always found to urge against Prosper Anguié's love of wassailing, admire now this soldier, for whom you would desert him; he is at heart a greater libertine!" And Florentine found not a word to utter in reply, for she was weeping bitterly.

The next morning, before daybreak, she was again at the gate, peering out with swollen eyes through the dim twilight; for still were the truants absent from the farm. Not a soul, however, was visible on the deserted road, nor was there a foot-print on the untrodden dust. She looked again and again, till her eyes were strained to blindness, but again and again in vain; when at last she discerned the sound of coming voices on the air, and saw, at a distance, the shadow of advancing figures; but not, alas! the two she watched for, nor any twain were there. It was a crowd, a trampling and dense multitude, that approached the farm—some talking, others weeping; and four among the throng, four strong men in the midst, bearing forward a dark and heavy object. The young girl closed those eyes so long overstrained to watch;—she dreaded, she knew not what;—she trembled, she knew not why;—grew faint, and clung, she knew not where;—and, at length, faltered a wild inquiry for explanation, she knew not unto whom.

But the words uttered in reply were equally incoherent, equally inconclusive in her ears; for, although they distinctly asseverated, "Behold! we bring home the body of Victor, thy brother, who has been slain on the hill-side; and Alphonse Déricourt, the murderer, is in custody for the crime." Florentine had no belief for assertions so extravagant.

Why linger out the tale of horror? The mangled body of the dead had been already examined by the officers of justice; and Alphonse, on strong grounds of suspicion, was about to be consigned to the dungeons of Rennes. It was subsequently proved that, in the presence of several witnesses, a quarrel had arisen, the preceding evening, between the parties. It was admitted by the afflicted parents, that Victor had expressed, on quitting home, an intention to address to his comrade, in the course of the day, the strongest remonstrances upon his conduct; and finally avouched by several strangers who had borne them company at the fête, that, at the very moment of leaving Beauchâtel, an altercation had been heard to arise—Victor being disposed to remain, and join in the dance, Alphonse angrily reminding him of his engagements with his mother and sister. Yet even these differences scarcely seemed to afford sufficient motive for a deed so deadly. Who else, however, was taxable with the crime? Victor was beloved of all—had never incurred the ill-will of mortal man; and scarcely a moment's attention was given to the declarations of Alphonse, on being taken into custody near the fatal spot, that himself and his friend were traversing a straggling thicket of maple-trees the preceding night, about half-way between Beauchâtel and the farm, when, being nearly fifty yards in the rear, he was alarmed by a sudden outcry; and, on pushing forwards to the spot, discerned Victor struggling with a strange antagonist, whose person the darkness of the night did not permit him to recognise; that, at the same moment, a sudden blow felled him to the earth, where he lay, stunned and insensible, till within a few minutes of the arrival of those stragglers from the fête of Beauchâtel, who, returning home after their revels, had been the first to discover the assassination, and summon to the spot the officers of justice.

"And have you no suspicion," inquired the *chef de gendarmerie* by whom the *procès-verbal* of these details was taken down, "concerning the person whom you state to have been guilty of the assault on the deceased?"

"A *strong* suspicion," replied Alphonse. "But mere suspicion warrants me not in proclaiming the name of a man who, after all, may be innocent as myself of the crime imputed."

"Nevertheless," argued the gendarme, "the mere avowal of your suspicions would do nothing to criminate an innocent person; and, for the satisfaction of the family of the deceased—of his father, mother, sister—no less than to forward the ends of justice, it becomes your duty to make a clear confession. An *alibi* were easily proved by any man *really* unengaged in the transaction. Speak, therefore, for innocence and conscience-sake.—Whom do you suspect as the perpetrator of the crime of which you stand accused?"

"I suspect Prosper Anguié, son to the intendant of the Comte de Clairval, and a pretender to the hand of the sister of the deceased," replied the prisoner, in a firm voice.

"Say, rather, the affianced husband of Florentine Raulain," cried several voices from the crowd.

"I say a *pretender* to her hand," persisted Alphonse.

"A pretender who will shortly be her bridegroom," retorted the same voices.

"Never!" replied the prisoner, in an indignant but solemn tone.

"Nevertheless, I am advised that the trothplight of the young people has been sanctioned by old Raulain and his wife," resumed the officer, who had inducements of his own for wishing to probe the feelings of the accused; "and, in spite of your recent denunciations, the cowardly assassination which has rendered Florentine Raulain sole heiress to the lands of Franchetour, may serve to postpone, but will not impede, the marriage."

"Not if there be faith on earth, or trust in Heaven!" exclaimed Déricourt, tormented beyond his power of self-restraint; "since Florentine is already my wife, by all but legal ties."

"Say you so?" retorted the man in office, with a triumphant smile. "Then yourself, and yourself only, could be interested in devising the death of her brother. Out of your own mouth have I convicted you!"

And, handcuffed as a malefactor, and pursued by the hootings of the crowd, Alphonse Déricourt was now carried off to Rennes by a troop of gendarmerie; while the body of the victim, so treacherously cut off, was consigned to an untimely grave, mourned by the whole population of the district; for they felt

that the young, the brave, the gladsome Victor should either have survived to fill his father's place among them, or have fallen, in all honour, upon one of those mighty fields of victory where his foot was so firm in the stirrup, and his arm so strong in the defence of his country.

Few, however, among the sympathising neighbours ventured to draw near to Franchetour, and condole with the bereaved parents; for it was already rumoured that the Raulains were undergoing other afflictions, in addition to the loss of their son, and that the farmer had been heard to say he would far rather have been doomed to lay the head of Florentine beside that of her brother in the grave, than learn of her all he had learned, or anticipate for her all he was forced to anticipate.

Meanwhile, the epoch for Déricourt's trial approached; and—none knew how or wherefore—in proportion as the day drew near, a report gathered strength in the country that Prosper Anguié, on the night of the murder, had been traced to the vicinity of the fatal spot, and been seen quitting it at an early hour of the morning, with ghastly looks and disordered attire; for, from the moment it had become known at Beauchâtel that Florentine had declared to her parents a determination to stand by her engagement to the prisoner of Rennes, and her conviction of his innocence, the ruffian associates of the intendant's son made no scruple of attacking him with taunts and menaces, which soon rendered it clear that his only chance of safety lay in precipitate departure from the country. With this view, he had already reached Nantes, intending to take his passage in the first outward-bound merchant-vessel. But the mischief was already done: a public inquiry had followed his furtive departure; and the fugitive was arrested, under circumstances adding fearfully to the amount of suspicion already amassed against him.

Now, therefore, for the first time, it was judged necessary, by his family and friends, to acquaint the Comte de la Tour-Clairval with the catastrophe which had occurred upon his estate, and its still impending results; and however unimportant the doughty suzerain might have considered the annihilation of a clod of his native valley arrayed in the livery of the usurper, or even the execution of a fellow-malignant—at once his comrade and as-

sassin—the Count thought proper to interfere, now that one of the retainers of his own household was implicated in the accusation. Engrossed as he was by his paramount duties of courtiership at the Tuileries, he took post immediately for Bretagne; made it his business to solicit the suffrage of the judges of the criminal tribunal at Rennes, as if the matter were one of avowed favour, rather than of evidence and conviction; and succeeded in procuring the promise of old Raulain to appear in court as witness for the prosecution against Alphonse Déricourt, against whom the old man now entertained, on other grounds, feelings of the most deadly enmity.

With Florentine, however, the Comte de Clairval was less successful: neither his threats, his insults, nor his cajolements, availed to shake *her* conviction of Déricourt's innocence, or her determination to become his wife, should his life be spared. However the fair fame of her lover might be tarnished—however harshly her father might eject her from his roof, or alienate from her his inheritance—she determined that no earthly consideration should deter her from bestowing her hand where she had already bestowed her heart, and more, alas! than her heart. On the day, therefore, when, arrayed in all his pomp, and sanctified by that odour of favouritism which, in the Bourbonised city of a thrice Bourbonised province, breathed its pernicious influence even over the purple of the church and the ermined mantle of the law, the Comte de la Tour-Clairval scrupled not to come forward in support of the crimes of his servant's son, without regard to the fate awaiting a fellow-creature, whose innocence lacked only the illustration of similar protection to become manifest—the sister of the murdered man came forward, in humble widow's weeds, sole witness in favour of the accused, to attest the enmity existing between Prosper Anguié and her brother, and the repeated warnings given her by the latter against the vindictive character of the pretender to her hand. And when, in spite of all her asseverations, and of evidence which, in less prejudiced cases, would have sounded trumpet-tongued in favour of Alphonse and condemnation of Anguié, the soldier of Napoleon's wars was condemned to twelve hours' of the exposure of the *carcan*, and seven years' hard labour at the galleys, Floren-

tine—unsubdued, unabashed—made known her intention to follow the victim in his fortunes, and to atone, by her staunch affection, for the injustice of man, and the severity of Divine Providence. Already she had attained her majority; her parents could only close their doors and hearts against her, and cast her off for ever. And while the beloved of her soul, the brother in arms of her lost Victor, stood beneath the branding-iron, exposed to the derision of multitudes, on a public scaffold, the unhappy girl was ever in his sight, cheering him from afar off with her mild voice; till, at every word of endearment, the tones grew fainter and fainter; and at length she was borne senseless into a guardhouse, from the crowded market-place of Rennes.

And this was Florentine of Franchetour—so young, so fair, so delicate—so tenderly cared for in her household home—so guarded round, from her youth upwards, with love and watchfulness! But she had hazarded all upon the die of that first and unalterable attachment; had periled more than the whole world could repay; had broken, for the sake of Alphonse, all earthly bonds—all human considerations; and now she must abide by the issue—must follow him to infamy—must labour for him, and watch and want, to supply him with those assuagements of his bitter sentence which she soon beheld the wives—ay, and the mistresses—of his fellow-convicts supply, at stated intervals, to the chain-bound malefactors of the galleys.

She *did* labour—she did watch—she did want; only when the period arrived for the birth of her child—her child of sorrow and shame—she obeyed the injunctions of the *galérien*, and made her way to the abode of his poor parents in the capital, so that his babe might see the light under the roof which had sheltered his birth, and find protection in case of her falling a sacrifice to protracted wretchedness and long privation.

And it was on the very eve of Florentine's return to Brest that she had wandered forth, in utter despair, to commit her child to the guardianship of the *Hospice des Enfans Trouvés!* She had not found courage, amid all her fortitude, to see it grow up to consciousness among the vile and degraded beings with whom she had compelled herself to associate, and, in anguish of spirit, had torn herself from the child; in patient humility submitted

to the coldness, and even reproaches, of a family who regarded her as in some measure the cause of the misfortunes of their son; and at length begged her way back to Brest, prepared to linger out with him, in shame and destitution, the remaining period of his condemnation. To her parents she had already sued in vain for pardon and pity. The old people hardened their hearts against a castaway who clung to the bosom of one whom they believed to be the assassin of their son; and though smiles never visited their furrowed faces, nor the sound of joy their desolate abode, plenty was at their board, and warmth by their fireside; while Florentine was ready to perish for lack of fire and food.

Meanwhile, Prosper Anguié, promoted by the interest of the family of Clairval, obtained an official appointment on the northern frontier of France, and was heard of, at distant intervals, in the neighbourhood of Beauchâtel, as not only prosperous, but reclaimed from the evil courses of his youth. By some strange vicissitude, the funds amassed by his father had suddenly disappeared about the period of the trial of Alphonse Déricourt, and many hinted that they had been sacrificed to the suborning of witnesses; while some asserted they had been simply melted away by old Anguié in the conscientious discharge of debts incurred by a libertine son. Certain it was that the old man died poor—a pensioner on the bounties of the Count; but Prosper was otherwise provided for, and soon became the founder of fortunes of his own. His utmost thriving, however, remained unenvied of Alphonse and Florentine, convinced, as they were, that the stain of blood was upon his hand, and that God, in his own good time, would deal upon the offender the vengeance of repayment.

Nor was their confidence misplaced in the eternal justice of the Judge of judges! About a year previous to the expiration of Déricourt's term of sentence, the attention of the tribunals of Arras was directed to the deposition of two strangers against their long-respected *chef d'octroi municipal*, Monsieur Anguié—a deposition of so serious a nature, as to necessitate his being committed to prison to take his trial for *murder*! On *this* occasion, conclusive evidence was not wanting; nor were the ends of justice frustrated by an overweening local influence. It appeared that two of the

former wild associates of the intendant's son—the confidants, if not the accomplices of his offences—having at length outwearied even the prodigality with which he was compelled to bribe their silence, had visited him at Arras, and out-taunted his patience; till Anguié, considering himself secure in the good name he had established, and the length of time which had elapsed since the condemnation of Déricourt, ventured on open defiance. A quarrel ensued; witnesses of the affray unhappily rushed in; when enough transpired to necessitate a second trial, and ensure the eventual condemnation of the real offender.

Alphonse and the devoted Florentine now reaped the full reward of their sufferings, in the joy with which they were welcomed back to the scene of their former humiliations. Her parents were still alive;—her former associates faithful to the memory of her early excellence. The second—the *legal*—marriage of the young couple was solemnised in presence of half the families of the district; and when, at the age of seven-and-twenty, Florentine Déricourt knelt down before her grey-headed father, to ask his benediction upon her union, the little foundling of the *Rue d'Enfer*, who was hiding his face in his mother's gown, with one glance of his bright but tearful eyes obtained old Raulain's pardon for the disobedience of his exemplary daughter.

All now is happiness at Franchetour. But when her familiar friends pause, amid the convivialities of some cheerful evening, to congratulate Madame Déricourt on the beauty of the younger babes, now springing up around her, and the vigilance of her maternal care, Florentine is heard to reply, with a soft glance towards her devoted husband, "They are, indeed, healthful and lovely; but, believe me, they have not more careful tending than is bestowed upon the poor orphans reared for the love of mercy in the *Hospice des Enfans Trouvés*."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

C.B.
LD.